HUMAN BEINGS,

A NOVEL.

VOLUME II.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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"*SUCH THINGS ARE.*"

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HUMAN BEINGS.

CHAPTER I.

La Belle Emigrée.

IT was a part of Lady Dellaval's system of notoriety and pleasure, always to give one grand party in the course of the winter, which she wished to have adorned with all the rank and fashion whom invitation could collect to grace it; and as the great seek pleasure with as eager a voracity as the little, number at least was a point in which it never proved deficient.

The present winter she had destined it to be a masked ball; a hint had already appeared in several of the fashionable morning prints of the splendid preparations which were making for the occasion; it stated that her Ladyship intended to surpass even the

elegant Mrs. W——, in her fête, and that the bloom of all the hot-houses within twenty miles of the metropolis was selecting, in order that her rooms might on the fifteenth of January in London, rival the fifteenth of June in the country.

Placed amidst society which the natural bent of her mind would undoubtedly not have led her to select, Amica was drawn by the circumstances arising from this cause to join in many amusements, which she entered into, not from any predilection which she herself entertained for them, but because she had no plausible excuse for refusing to partake in them; the fear of being accounted singular too by those into whose society they are thrown, is often a cause for leading young persons into a line of conduct opposite to the real sentiments of their hearts; and one of the sacrifices of her time which Amica made to this feeling, was that of frequently accompanying Lady Dellaval in her morning drive through Hyde-park in a dashing curricle drawn by a pair of spirited greys, whose reins were never permitted to be held in any hands but those of her Ladyship.

In one of these drives on the Sunday previous to the expected fête, the curricle of Lady Dellaval, like many other carriages which the fineness of the day had tempted out, was for a short time hemmed in between two other vehicles similar to itself, which obstructed its progress; whilst detained in this situation, her Ladyship suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, Heavens, here comes that horrid man."

"Whom do you mean?" cried Amica, casting her eyes around upon the passing multitude.

"Why that man that the Colonel is acquainted with," replied Lady Dellaval. "What is his name, chip, or log, or—oh no, no, Block, 'tis Block."

"Do you know Mr. Block?" inquired Amica, with some degree of surprise.

"Hush, here he is," cried her Ladyship, "you shall see I'll get quit of him directly."

Jarvis Block at this moment rode up to them on horseback, and as he was on the point of addressing them, her Ladyship called out, "How do you do? do you know it is in your power to do me the greatest service imaginable;—I this instant saw the

Colonel riding full gallop past the garden wall; will you ride after him and tell him that I want of all things in the world to speak to him immediately."

"I shall be very happy, indeed my Lady, oblige you," cried Block with a smile of the greatest pleasure and consequence united on his countenance, and directly galloped off in the direction Lady Dellaval had pointed out to him.

"Fairly taken in," cried her Ladyship, with a loud laugh the moment he was out of hearing, "Now I shall turn round my horses, heads and drive towards home;" and as the train of carriages moving in the opposite direction to that in which she had hitherto been a a prisoner was by no means so numerous as that of those she was now hemned in amongst, she easily effected her purpose: "Was it not a very good manuvre, for cutting him?" asked her Ladyship, as soon as her end was accomplished.

Amica could not forbear smiling at the dexterity with which her Ladyship had invented an excuse to avoid being seen in public with Jarvis Block as one of her attendants; but was equally surprised how

they had ever become acquainted at all, and made an inquiry to that purport.

"Why," returned her Ladyship, "Colonel Buckhurst called with him one evening at my house! I know nothing of him, except that he appears to be very vulgar, and equally good tempered," and having said this, she directly changed the conversation; but Amica did not so immediately dismiss the subject from her mind; she conceived that there must be some reason why a woman of Lady Dellaval's freedom of speech and action, had not passed a severer judgement upon a man so entirely out of her sphere as Jarvis Block; why she had not laughed at a man of the Colonel's fashion for acknowledging such an acquaintance; and why she had troubled herself to invent an excuse for sending him from her in the park with an appearance of civility, instead of cutting him with the coolness and effrontery natural to characters like her own.

That there must be some motive for her conduct Amica could not help discovering, although she had no clue for unravelling that motive; but as this is not a book of

mysteries, our readers shall have a hint of the hidden cause before we proceed.

Lady Dellaval had resolved upon appearing at her own mask'd fête as an Egyptian princess; she had devised in her own mind a most superb dress for the character, but she had for some time been at a great loss where to get it embroidered, as she had determined to tell the world that it was her own work, and dared not trust to any of the milliners of fashion to provide her with a person adequate to the task, lest they should contradict the story she intended to circulate of her own industry and ingenuity.

To no one therefore durst she impart the secret of her design but to her confidental waiting woman, whom she dispatched to summon to her presence a Madame Le Blanc, an unfortunate emigrée, who had advertised herself in one of the morning papers as being reduced to the necessity of maintaining herself by her needle, and as particularly skilful in works of fancy and embroidery.

Madame Le Blanc obeyed the call of her Ladyship with great thankfulness, and having displayed specimens of her talents with which Lady Dellaval was pleased, and promised

inviolable secrecy with regard to the task which it was required of her to perform; she received an order for the splendid set of habiliments her Ladyship had already devised, and which received many material improvements both in form and decoration, from the taste of Madame Le Blanc.

Whilst the work was in hand, Madame Le Blanc was directed to call upon her Ladyship every other morning, in order that she might inspect her progress; these directions the emigrée cheerfully obeyed; and at her departure from the house on one of these days, she was met upon the stairs by Colonel Buckhurst, who was ascending them to pay a morning visit to her Ladyship.

Both the person and form of the emigrée were of a superior and fascinating kind, and they immediately made an impression on the heart of the Colonel; the little box which she carried in her hand, explained to him that she was not in a situation in life which forbad him to encourage such ideas as had instantly started into his brain concerning her; and he returned to the hall to inquire of the footman who had let her out, who, and what she was?

The servant replied, "That he knew nothing of her, except that she was a French-woman, and came to the house, as he believed, to receive charity from his Lady."—This idea her Ladyship's confidential woman had circulated in the family, purposely to cover the real cause of her frequent calls.

If the Colonel was sometimes at a loss how to answer the demands of his tradesmen for the payment of their bills, he always found the means of raising a sum of money sufficient for the purchase of any pleasure of which he desired the enjoyment: he heard with satisfaction that *La Belle Emigrée* was in a situation to require the relief of the benevolent, and he determined, with the hastiness natural to men of fervid passions, unacquainted with the controul of reason, to learn from Lady Dellaval who her pensioner was, and to offer himself before her, as her most liberal friend.

Thus resolved he ran up to her Ladyship's dressing room, which their intimacy had given him the privilege of entering; and his first address to her was the inquiry uppermost in his thoughts:—Her Ladyship was sufficiently initiated into every branch of the ton, not to feel any sympton approaching to the

mounting of blood up to her cheeks, at a question of this nature, and with an intelligent smile, she replied, "You shall not know from me, I protest."

"I'm a Dutchman if I don't," cried the Colonel.

"I swear by pam and flush you shall not," returned lady Dellaval. "You are now in arrears to me; I have made six or seven Lansquenet parties for you within the last six weeks, and you have not introduced any body new to my house within as many months."

Many of the expressions and articles of the system of fashionables require to be written with notes for the accommodation of such of our readers as are not initiated into their mysteries, and we conceive them to be requisite upon Lady Dellaval's last speech.

We have already said, that it was by a general plan of accommodation to the loungers of ton, that Lady Dellaval maintained her rank at the head of the fashion; —amongst her most favourite votaries was Colonel Buckhurst; on one account because he was as much the fashion as her-

self; on another, because he was fond of that kind of play by the encouragement of which he led other fashionable gamblers to her house:—Her Ladyship kept a pharo bank, and it was whispered about, that the Colonel had half of it, and that it was a very lucrative firm: But still though fully satisfied with her colleague, she did not permit him to be an useless adherent; it was she who furnished the rooms, the candles, the refreshments, the cards, &c. and she required of him to introduce new faces to the table:—In doing this he had lately been deficient, notwithstanding she had lately changed her game to Lansquenet, for his accommodation, and had gained nothing by the alteration but the honour of seeing Lord Loseall pigeoned in her rookery without coming in for a share of his feathers:—From this circumstance arose the accusation which she preferred against him; and she was actuted by far other motives than delicacy in refusing to inform him, of Madame Le Blanc's name and place of abode.

"I'll tell you what, Buckhurst," she went on, "you know it is not particularly

my system to want to win, but you might have considered the expence my fête will put me to, and invited some of those young fellows who will lose their money either at one place or another, to my house."

"Pshaw, nonsense, curse talking about all that now," cried the Colonel, "I've ordered you a diamond feather, to be home on the morning of your ball;—and now where does this delightful French girl live?"

"That's rational in you," returned her Ladyship; "let me have a buckle to correspond with it for my waist, will you?"

"Upon my soul you shall," replied the Colonel,—"come, her name?"

"As soon as ever I have seen one new face at the Pharo table," she returned.

"Damn it, you are too exorbitant; upon my soul you are," cried the Colonel,—"come don't be a fool, Dellaval."

"I don't intend it," replied she, "and therefore I stick to my text."

The Colonel threw himself upon the sofa, and sat beating his boot with a hazel twig, which at the present moment of his disappointment and passion, he would have felt no remorse in applying to the back of her Ladyship, who stood meanwhile before the glass fitting on a new head-dress, and humming a favourite Polacca.

Suddenly starting from his seat, the Colonel broke silence by exclaiming, "I'll tell you what, I have just now thought of a fellow that would think it the greatest honor you could do him, to take a hundred or two guineas off his hands."

"Who is he? *any-body?*" asked Lady Dellaval, "because I am *at home*, to about seventy to night."

"Oh no, he won't do for that," returned the Colonel, "he is quite an animal, though a monstrous dasher in his own way."

"Has he no name?" inquired her Ladyship; and the Colonel immediately gratified her with a short sketch of the history of Jarvis Block; which having concluded in very few words, he added, "No

he'll only do for one of your snugs—Well, what do you say, shall I bring him?"

After some hesitation, her Ladyship replied, "that fond as she was of new acquaintance, still she could not bear vulgar wretches, and that nothing should induce her to tolerate them, but the immense expence she was going to be at for her approaching *fête*; but that on this sole consideration, the Colonel might bring him to her house on the following evening, when she would invite two or three intimates who were too much in love with cards to care with whom they played, just to make a party at *vingt-un*"

It was agreed that Mr. Jarvis Block's introduction to the *vingt-un* table of Lady Dellaval should be the price of the Colonel's being made acquainted with the name of the fair *Emigrée*; and upon this they parted;—Her Ladyship well satisfied that she had been able to get quit of the Colonel without replying immediately to the question which he was anxious to have solved; and on this account, because she dreaded, that as necessity alone had driven

the French woman to become the embroideress of her Egyptian dress, should that necessity be put a period to by the generosity of the Colonel, her dress might never be finished at all; and she was therefore only desirous of concealing from him her name and abode, till she was certain no disappointment could arise to herself from making them known to him.

In due time, however, the desired ends of both the parties took place; Jarvis Block was taught *vingt-un* at a snug of Lady Dellaval's, and like all learners of new games in the metropolis, paid handsomely for his teaching;—The Lady's diamond feather and buckle, (inimitably manufactured by Dovey) were presented to her by the Colonel;—and her Egyptian dress being likewise safely deposited in her wardrobe, he obtained from her, without farther delay, the information which he wished to gain relative to Madame Le Blanc:—and here we shall leave him, saying nothing for the present of the success which attended his introduction

of himself to the *Belle Emigrée,* and return to Lady Dellaval and Amica, who had by this time passed the park gate, and were rattling over the pavement of Piccadilly.

CHAPTER II.

A young Gentleman, of three score and odd.

THEY had scarcely reached Saint James's Street when they were passed by an elegant post chariot and four, accompanied by two out riders, and Lady Dellaval suddenly observing it, exclaimed, "Bless my soul! I thought he would not have come till to-morrow;" then with a familiar nod, she added, "How do you do?" in a tone scarcely audible to Amica, much less to any one in the carriage on the opposite side of the street.

The glasses of the chariot were all drawn up, and rendered impervious to the eye by the breath of those within, which had collected upon them.—Amica inquired to whom the carriage belonged?

"To my father," replied Lady Dellaval, "he is come to town for the winter; my *fête* brings him three weeks sooner than his usual time."

Amica innocently remarked, that Sir Jasper must enjoy very good health to be able to derive pleasure from an evening of that nature at nearly seventy years of age, which she had understood him to be.

"He is only sixty-five in years, upon my honour," replied her Ladyship, "but in health he is above an hundred; a martyr to the gout.—I engage you to him for the two first dances on Tuesday evening."

"I enter willingly into your joke," returned Amica, "I dare say it is quite as unlikely that I shall get any other partner, as that I shall dance with Sir Jasper."

"I am not joking," Lady Dellaval replied, "I mean as I say, and I assure you I feel too much interested in the happiness that I know he will derive from having you for a partner to admit of any excuse."

Still at a loss to comprehend her meaning, Amica said, "Surely at sixty-five years of age, and a martyr to the gout,

as you have just described Sir Jasper, he cannot be a dancer."

"He exists only at a ball," cried her Ladyship, "the delight he experiences in being a pretty woman's partner always renders him heroical enough to encounter the fatigues of the dance, though he is certain of being laid up with the sciatica the very next day,—and it often confines him to the sofa for three or four months together."

Amica did not express her sentiments, but she felt an earnest wish that Sir Jasper might not repeat the request for her hand in the dance, which his daughter had already advanced for him; and that she might not be compelled to be a party concerned in subjecting him to one of those martyrdoms of three or four months of which Lady Dellaval had spoken.—— They shortly after reached Hanover-Square, and nothing farther was said upon the subject, except that when Amica was alighting from the curricle at the door of Sir Benjamin Buckhurst's house, Lady Dellaval called out, "Remember the two first dances on Tuesday night."

Amica still hoped that as her Ladyship was very fond of a *quiz*, she might have been jesting, or, that if she had not, Sir Jasper might prove of a different opinion respecting the pleasure to be derived from dancing with her to what his daughter had expressed herself to suppose that he would; and thought no more of what had passed, till she was reminded of it on the following day about the hour that people of fashion call two o'clock in the morning, by the servant opening the drawing-room door where she was sitting with Lady Buckhurst, and announcing Lady Dellaval and Sir Jasper Wormeaten.

Her Ladyship entered first, and having introduced her father to Amica and Lady Buckhurst, she flung herself into a chair, and took up a new book which attracted her attention on the table; leaving the parties just become acquainted, to amuse each other as they pleased, or as they could.

Before we proceed to recount in what manner the Baronet made his attempt to this end, let us give a description of his person: his figure was tall, and his visage lank; the skin of the latter was stretched over his jaw and cheek bones, as tightly as the horn upon

a lanthorn, and resembled that material very closely in colour; his eyes were of a light grey, and required the constant application of a cambric handkerchief to imbibe the pearly drops with which a weakness in those organs was always causing them to overflow; hair he had probably none, the deficiency was supplied by a wig of so youthful a kind as to increase, by the force of contrast, the antique appearance of the countenance upon whose crown it was perched—toothless, no one could with veracity affirm him to be, but one tooth alone was visible of those which were remaining to him, and this extended itself considerably from the left side of his upper jaw, which had it been entirely bereft of its ivory appendages, would still have appeared too prominent by an inch or more for the line of beauty, as described by Hogarth, in his analysis; and his nose being itself formed of one strait line was equally at variance with the line just referred to. From his head downwards his form might very justly have been styled a bag of bones, for the different parts of his dress hung upon him as if a skeleton had been their wearer; nothing about him appeared sufficiently fat to be

comfortable but his neck, and this was wound round with as many bandages, as if it had been the neck of a mummy.—Instead of a coat, he wore one of those jackets, which, in the curtailment of the skirts belonging to a coat, appear to refute the impossibility of a fine gentleman being an economist; and the want of that drapery behind, which if he had studied the becoming, rather than the fashionable, he would have found of infinite service to his person, in concealing the immense length of his thighs and legs, made him appear to those who followed him, like one mounted upon stilts, or indeed more like a pair of tongs put into motion by witchcraft; that is, all legs and no body.—In short to sum up in one sentence the characteristic epithet of Sir Jasper Wormeaten, he looked in every respect what he was—a battered beau.

The Baronet having taken his seat by the side of Amica, gave a preparatory hem, and pulling up his neckcloth with the air of a fop, as he spoke, said, "That he was come to solicit in person for the honour which his daughter had on the preceding day implored

for him of Amica, and which he hoped she would not have the severity to deny him."

Amica felt excessively reluctant to reply; she knew that good manners demanded of her an acquiescence to his request; and self-love rendered her so extremely adverse to comply with their dictates, that a gentle inclination of the head, was all the reply she could prevail upon herself to make.

"To what are you assenting my dear?" asked Lady Buckhurst. Sir Jasper immediately explained for her.

"I am sure Sir, you are very good, and very obliging," replied her Ladyship. "Very polite, indeed, Sir."

"The happiness is conferred on me, madam," answered Sir Jasper, "I shall become a very Vestris by inspiration whilst I touch the hand of your daughter."

"Aye, you are very polite, Sir," rejoined Lady Buckhurst, "but don't you carry your good breeding too far: I am sure it must be a great labour to a gentleman of your age to go down a couple of dances."

The Baronet's countenance underwent a change by no means expressive of pleasure at this unqualified reference to his *age* from a

stranger, who could have nothing but his appearance, which he believed extremely youthful, to judge of his years by. "Next to the adoration which I pay to beauty," he said, "the dance, has been my hobby, ever since left school."

"But let me tell you, Sir" replied Lady Buckhurst, who still only considered that Sir Jasper had invited Amica to dance, merely out of compliment, as being an intimate acquaintance of his daughter's, "Let me tel you, dancing ain't what it was when you left school; minuets were in fashion then, and one might walk a minuet with little or no fatigue; Buttered Peas, and Lucy's Delight, were my favourite country dances; but all the dances are changed now; and they dance the new fashioned ones at least as quick again as they used to do the old ones; and the Scotch reels are enough to turn one's head only to look at them.—Yes, Sir, indeed, I don't know any thing that is more changed than dancing within these last fifty years."

At the sound of fifty years, it was discernable that Sir Jasper's feelings received an additional wound; but commanding a smile, he said, "Your Ladyship has infini-

nitely the advantage of me, in having possessed a memory so much longer than myself."

"Lord bless me, Sir Jasper," she replied, "I beg your pardon for my mistake, but I'm sure, Sir, by your look I took you to be about my standing; and I shall be sixty-four next birth-day."

Sir Jasper returned a grave and consequential bow, and Sir Benjamin and the Colonel happily entered the apartment at that moment, to the relief of the parties whom it contained. With the Colonel, Sir Jasper was already well acquainted; he had also some distant knowledge of Sir Benjamin, and they directly began to converse upon topics which drove from his immediate recollection the unfortunate mistakes of Lady Buckhurst.

"If you have any compassion in you," said Lady Dellaval, "my dear Amica, do order me a sandwich, I am completely starved to death; I have this morning been attending so long to the people who are preparing my rooms for to-morrow night, that I really have not found a moment yet to take the least sustenance whatever; I am absolutely enduring famine."

The Colonel swore that he was as hungry as the devil, he had been trotting one of his horses a certain number of miles in the hour for a considerable wager, and if there was a beef-stake in the house, he declared he must have it dressed immediately.

"I hate beef when it is regularly served up at dinner," cried Lady Dellaval, "but for the whim of the thing, I'll join you."

The Colonel promised her the first cut; and to the great disquietude of Lady Buckhurst, who did not like any orderer but herself in her own house, a beef-steak was ordered by her son-in-law; her Ladyship now felt herself compelled to ask Sir Jasper, whether any refreshment would be agreeable to him; and almost with as little ceremony as had been used by his daughter, he requested a couple of poached eggs.

In about three quarters of an hour the dishes were served up; Lady Dellaval eat voraciously of the beef-steak; for in eating it as a luncheon she judged herself to be singular, at least as a female; and the idea of singularity always gave her spirits, and plea-

sure.—Sir Jasper placed himself as sociably before his eggs, and shook upon them such an immensity of Cayenne, which he politely called *red pepper,* that Lady Buckhurst, either out of economy, or real anxiety for his health, remarked that it could not be wholesome for any body to eat so great a quantity of a spice of that heating quality.

"Do you call this much?" exclaimed Sir Jasper, with affected astonishment, "I eat treble that quantity with my poached eggs and veal in the night."

"Eggs and veal in the night, Sir!" echoed Lady Buckhurst: "morning perhaps may be mo e correct," he replied coolly, "but constantly between two and three, in what I call the night, I am awakened, and a veal cutlet and two eggs are brought to my bedsi e; my physician recommends them as the most efficacious restorative that has ever been discovered; and I give you my honour I find it very beneficial to my system."

"Pray, Sir, what may your complaint be?" asked Lady Buckhurst.

"Oh, I am in perfect health," he replied, "only I use those kind of preventatives against the wearing away of my animal

strength—I take something almost every hour hour of the day, and of that nature which you would perhaps call medicine; and yet I am perfectly well; shrimps with my breakfast to produce a relish for my tea; a little dram of nervous cordial to counteract the effects of the hyson on my spirits—hartshorn jelly at noon; turtle soup at dinner; sweetmeats with my wine; eggs in the afternoon with my coffee; and shell-fish for my supper; but I am never disturbed except twice at most in the night; once with my eggs and my veal, and sometimes a second time with my soda water, but I more frequently take them together; it is troublesome to be sure, but it keeps me from being enervated.

The elegant repast being concluded, Sir Jasper and his daughter took their leave, declaring they had a thousand calls to make before dinner.

No sooner was Lady Buckhurst left alone with her family, than she burst forth into the exclamation of, "Why goodness me! only think of an old gentleman like that making engagements to dance; why what would the world say of Sir Benjamin and me, if we were to think of capering about at a ball?"

"Old gentlemen, ma'am," cried the Colonel, "there is not such a thing now a days; nobody is old but the prince of the infernals; and nobody young, but the unknowing ones; a single man, like Sir Jasper, who frequents public places, has a title, drinks his two bottles after dinner, and finishes his day in every respect as if he were not five and twenty, would challenge a man that did not allow him to be in his prime at three score."

"Well, I am thankful to say I am a woman then," replied Lady Buckhurst, "for without meaning any offence to him, I began to tell him my mind pretty freely about what I considered him to be capable of at his age; and as he is a man of rank I should have been sorry to have affronted him; but amongst ourselves, I must say, I never heard of such an odd thing in my life, as for a person to be wakened in the night, to have a hot dinner or supper which ever you may please to call it, of veal cutlets and poached eggs."

"Why how the deuce," exclaimed Sir Benjamin, "do you suppose that a decrepit old fellow like that should be able to dance,

and drink his two bottles after dinner, and finish his day in every respect like a young man of twenty-five, as the Colonel says, if he did not find out some way of supplying the deficiency of natural strength, by pouring artificial substitutes for it into his veins? in my opinion he looks more like an old baboon than a man, and I think all rakes that do not reform in their old age generally do."

"Aye," cried Lady Buckhurst, with an intelligent smile, "I thought he looked as if he had been a gay hand."

Amica took up her book, and left the room;—Sir Benjamin in his descriptions of characters, and his passion for anecdotes respecting them, often allowed his tongue a licence, which, as Amica found her presence did not check in its ebullitions, whenever the possibility of escaping from being an auditor of them was afforded her, she never failed to avail herself of it, and thus spared her cheeks many a blush which Sir Benjamin was either careless, or ignorant, of colouring them with.

We shall leave the room with Amica, as many of our readers will probably prefer her society to Sir Benjamin's, and instead of listening to his account of Sir Jasper Wormeaten's foibles and fancies, give a short account of them in our own words.

We have already seen sufficient of Sir Jasper to know that he was an old beau; and that every pretty woman had charms for his heart—but in this account only half his character is given; for Sir Jasper did not allow himself to be old; and obstinate as he was in this particular, it would have been more easy to convince him of his age, than that he was not possessed of those charms for the female sex, with which they inspired him.—Sir Jasper regarded himself as a matured Adonis; in whom were combined the gaieties of youth, with the knowledge of man; and this union of personal and mental accomplishments he believed to render him irresistible.—If a woman ventured a hint to the contrary, he directly considered her as desperately in love with him, and chagrined that he had hitherto been more attentive to other women.—If such an

opinion fell from the lips of a man, he immediately set him down as envious of his superior attractions.—And even when labouring under the phthisic or sciatica, instead of sinking beneath the humiliation of disease and pain, his vanity gathered strength, from the idea of his appearance being rendered more interesting by his sufferings.

During the life-time of his wife, who had died about a month after the period of her giving birth to their only child, Lady Dellaval, he had made a tolerably constant husband; at least his flirtations had been fewer, and perhaps less noticed, because confined to women of his own age; but as he had advanced in years, like all men who are acknowledged gallants, his passion for youth had increased with his own age; and whilst matrimony with a young and pretty woman, was the most exalted wish of his soul, his conversation decidedly professed him to have no idea of a second time entering into the married state; beneath which shallow *finesse* he unsuccessfully endeavoured to conceal many disappointments which had attended the repeated offers he had made of his hand.

CHAPTER III.

What can the Matter be?

SEVERAL times during the course of that evening and the following morning, did Amica reflect with dissatisfaction on her engagement to Sir Jasper Wormeaten; she was as free from vanity as almost any woman existing, and yet she did not like the idea of being the partner of an old man.—A ball is a season in which youth is justified in looking forward to a great degree of pleasure; and that pleasure is materially curtailed by our partner in it, being one of an age which is expected to be less animated in amusements of such a nature; and which when it exerts a sprightliness which we cannot help considering as very incongruous with its years, its strength, and its feelings collectively, appears to be burlesquing the amusement which we are actually enjoying.

Thus impressed, and almost indifferent whether or not she went at all to Lady Dellaval's masked ball, she was sitting in the drawing-room about noon, when the door of the apartment was thrown open to Mr. Leuwitzer, who to her great surprise was followed by Maurice Stanton.

Mr. Leuwitzer had expressed a constant wish that whenever Maurice should be able to obtain leave of absence from his regiment, for however short a time the permission were granted him, he should take the opportunity of paying him a visit; on this request he had laid a greater stress than ever, since Amica had ceased to be one of his family; and Maurice, never so happy as in the society of his patron, had found means of reaching Richmond on the preceding evening.

The good German, who next to the happiness of those whom he loved, delighted in procuring them innocent amusement, had heard of Lady Dellaval's intended fête, which was blazoned through town, as the most splendid thing of the kind expected to take place that winter;

and had brought Maurice to London with him in order to request the Buckhurst family to use their interest with her Ladyship, for procuring him an invitation to join in the festivities of the evening.

Scarcely were the first expressions of pleasure between Stanton and Amica at their unexpected meeting past, ere Colonel Buckhurst entered the drawing-room, and Mr. Leuwitzer almost immediately proceeded to state to him the business which had brought him to Hanover-square.—The Colonel informed him that he had met with the only one in the family who could have been of service to him in the gratification of his wish, for that Lady Dellaval had issued a certain number of invitations, which she had vowed not to exceed; but that he being one of her particular friends, had been presented by her with several cards, which she had given him the liberty of bestowing on such of his acquaintance, as he felt an inclination to oblige, and that he had still a couple of them undisposed of; of which one was at Maurice's service.

This point being settled to the satisfaction of Mr. Leuwitzer, he shortly after rose to depart, telling Maurice he should expect to see him on the following afternoon at Richmond;—as he was in the act of leaving the room, he beckoned to Amica to follow him out of it; she complied with his request; and as she joined him in the gallery, she said, "Shall we go into the dining-room for a few minutes, Sir, if you wish to have any conversation with me?"

"No, no," he replied, "there is no occasion for that; I can tell you in one minute what I have to say—there is a little box," (putting a small black case into her hands as he spoke) "that contains a present for you, which I trust, although your mother is a woman of great affluence, she can have no objection to your accepting from me, as I give it to you with the affection of a father;—good morning, my dear Amica."—He was already on the first stair, when he spoke these words, and at the bottom of them, before Amica could

utter her thanks.—These, she would have returned to him with equal fervency for the kind sentence with which his present had been delivered into her hands, had it been only of the value of a straw, instead of the worth which she found it to be of on opening the lid of the shagreen case in which it was contained; where extended on a velvet bed, she perceived a most beautiful diamond sprig.

The tenderness and affection which the benefactor of her early years continued upon every occasion still to display for her, drew the tears of gratitude into her eyes; and after she had given a few moments to the indulgence of grateful sensations, she went to her mother's apartment, and shewed her Mr. Leuwitzer's present.

Lady Buckhurst was in raptures at the sight; she declared, "that *Jarman* gentleman was the best kind of a man she had ever known;—a present of that kind was a gentleman's present indeed; and a much handsomer trinket than Sir Benjamin had ever treated her with, notwithstanding the great property she had brought him in

marriage—she dared to say it was worth the best part of two hundred pounds; and she should not wonder if it had been intended by him as an earnest of what he meant to do for her at his death."

Amica regarded it as an earnest of a much more valuable consideration to her; his parental love during the period of his life;. and breathed a secret prayer that he might long be continued to her on earth.

Mr. Leuwitzer's present to her daughter had put Lady Buckhurst into such excellent humour with every one connected with him, that hearing Maurice Stanton was below, she immediately went down to him, and not only invited him to dinner, but offered him a bed after Lady Dellaval's fête. Maurice having accepted her invitation, she turned to the Colonel, and said, "She hoped he was come to dine in Hanover-square, for that Sir Benjamin was gone out for the day, and she should else have no gentleman to entertain Mr. Stanton."

"I am not going away that I know of," answered the Colonel, "I believe Mr.

Block will dine here; I am not certain he'll come; I have not seen him myself, but I called at the coffee-house where he lodges this morning, and left a note for him, saying I should be glad to see him to take his dinner with me here?"

Her Ladyship had been forewarned by her son-in-law, that Block would dine with them one day by his invitation, so merely replied, "Ah very well, better to-day than when we have company; I make no apologies to Mr. Stanton, for he knows him I find."

The Colonel's spirits were always good, but on this morning they were unusually great, as if elated by some pleasurable reflection, or anticipation:—he walked up and down the room, whistling and singing, sometimes half laughing, and once or twice actually dancing.

"What are you so merry about to-day?" asked Lady Buckhurst, "I suppose the thoughts of Lady Dellaval's masquerade puts you into such tip-top spirits."

"Oh, aye, true," cried the Colonel, "to night is Dellaval's masquerade."

"Why certainly it is;" replied her Ladyship, "to be sure you could not have forgot that."

"Upon my soul I had almost," ejaculated the Colonel, with a stifled laugh.

"Ah, you are only quizzing, as you call it," returned her Ladyship, "for I should not mind betting a shilling, your head is full of nothing else.—I assure you that I, who can only sit still in corner, as I may say, reckon very much upon seeing the sight.—Do not you, Sir?" she added, addressing Maurice.

He replied in the affirmative; and her Ladyship then inquired what character he meant to assume?—He had not yet, he said, given the matter a thought, but intended in the evening to send and hire some habit as little conspicuous as possible, as he had never been a partaker in an amusement of the kind, and therefore wished at his first *debut*, rather to be an observer of the scene, than a busy member of it.

"But that is not your taste, I think I can answer," rejoined her Ladyship, turning to the Colonel; "you'll make choice

of something dashing, and particular enough I warrant me."

"Oh, a friar for me," exclaimed the Colonel, "that is your sly habit, that does most execution in life; so I'll try it at the masquerade, *if* I go."

"*If* you go," echoed Lady Buckhurst: "Why to be sure you can't have any thoughts to the contrary?"

"I told you before, I had not thought about it," returned the Colonel in a tone of voice that would have prevented her Ladyship's farther inquiries, if they had not been put an effectual stop to by his leaving the room.—But still she could not forbear wondering what could be the reason that there should be a doubt about his going to the fête of so particular a friend as Lady Dellaval. "Why what can be the meaning of it?" she exclaimed—Maurice replied, that he could not give her any information upon the subject; and Amica, who never was surprised at any of the Colonel's actions, nor ever accustomed herself to endeavour to discover their motives, did not reply at all.

About twenty minutes before five, which was the dinner hour at Sir Benjamin's, came Jarvis Block; and happening by accident to find Maurice Stanton at the time of his arrival alone in the drawing-room, a conversation immediately took place between them, which informed Block of the engagement which Maurice had through the interest of the Colonel been able to make for the evening.

"Gad Mr. Stanton," cried Block, "that my Lady Dellavall is one of the finest, dashingest ladies you ever saw in your life; I don't doubt but things will be in a high style there to night;—I really do think I'd give ten guineas to be one of the party myself."

Scarcely had he pronounced these words, ere Colonel Buckhurst opened the drawing-room door, with a countenance that shewed him already apprised of who was in it, and addressing Block, he said, "How are you?" I'm devilish glad to see you—let me have five minutes conversation with you before dinner, my dear fellow, will you?"

"Certainly, Sir; to be sure, Colonel," answered Block, and followed him out of the room.

About ten minutes after five, Lady Buckhurst entered the room followed by the butler, who was enquiring of her, whether dinner might be put upon the table.—"You must wait a few minutes longer," she replied, "I have tapped at the study door this minute, and asked the Colonel whether he and Mr. Block were ready for dinner, and they beg to be allowed a short time longer to themselves; so, I can't help it; if it is sent up it will only get cold on the table; it had better be kept hot by the fire till he chooses to come to it."

The butler retired—Her Ladyship remained standing in the middle of the room, and listening whether she could catch any sounds that announced the Colonel to have left the study; and as she listened some moments and no sounds of the nature she wished to hear met her ear, she said, "I can't think what in the name of wonder the Colonel can have to say to that Mr. Block, that can require them to

be shut up in the study together. The Colonel has no consideration: he knows we have cod-fish for dinner, and if it stands in the water it will grow as hard as a board."

Neither Maurice nor Amica made any reply; and her Ladyship—sometimes eloquently silent, sometimes inarticulately plaintive,—continued wandering about the room, till a neighbouring clock struck three quarters after five. "Lord bless me!" she then exclaimed, "we shall have the beef roasted off the spit, as well as the fish spoiled;" and with these words she rang the bell.

Again the butler made his appearance.—"Tell the Colonel," she said, "that it is impossible to wait any longer: I expect to find every dish spoiled already."

The butler departed, and returned with information that the dinner might be placed upon table at the expiration of five minutes more.

"Be sure not to exceed the time;" for I won't wait another instant," rejoined her Ladyship: and a third time the butler left the room. "I am perfectly astonished what my son-in-law and Mr. Block can be about together," she then repeated: "not indeed that

any of the Colonel's actions ought to surprise me, for I am sure I know nothing of his concerns; only it appears so odd that he should have any business of consequence with a man like Mr. Block, one can't help wondering at it."

At the expiration of about twice the given five minutes, the dinner was announced to be upon the table. Her Ladyship, Amica, and Maurice immediately went down into the dining-room; where they had scarcely seated themselves, ere the Colonel and Jarvis Block joined them.

Her Ladyship, instantly upon their appearance, began to expatiate on the injury which had been sustained both by her fish and her meat, in not having been eaten a full half hour sooner. The Colonel, contrary to his usual disposition with regard to his lady-mother's observations upon his conduct, whenever she ventured to make any, appeared in a humour wherein it was not possible for her to offend him by any of her remarks; and Jarvis Block seemed to a common observer as full of mirth as himself; one more intimately acquainted with the turns of his countenance would have perceived that there was something like anxie-

ty concealed beneath the varnish of smiles which he wore upon his features.

Dinner proceeded, and towards the close, her Ladyship remarked that Mr. Block did not eat. "Well, if it is not to your liking," she added, "it is your own fault; you are one of them that helped to spoil it."

"Pshaw! nonsense!" cried the Colonel, "I know why he can't eat. Shall I tell, Block?"

The word *tell* drew the eyes of all present upon him to whom it had been addressed, and to whom it appeared to refer: he stammered, looked foolishly, and said, "Tell, Colonel? Why as to telling—you don't mean—that is, *I* can't have any"—

"Ha! ha! ha!" cried the Colonel; "curst good, upon my soul!—He owns it!—He can't have any objection to letting his friends into the secret, he means to say.—I have given him a ticket for Dellaval's masquerade, and the idea of going to such a glorious frolic has taken away his appetite.—Excuse me, my dear fellow; but I felt so myself the first time I was taken to the play."

Block eyed the Colonel with a mingled surprise and doubt when he began his sen-

tence, and as he drew towards its conclusion his features relaxed into a smile, and he said, "Why I certainly like the notion of going to this here fine lady's ball very well, because it is a kind of genteel thing I never had a chance to see before; but I can't say that, if my appetite is less than usual, it is owing to that: Mr. Stanton knows that I generally eat a good luncheon, and we can't eat every hour in the day: however, Sir, we can generally find room for a little drink; so, if you please, I'll take a glass of madeira with you."

Maurice accepted his challenge, and the conversation for a time took a change.

"And so we are to see you at the masquerade—are we, Mr. Block?" said her Ladyship, after the cloth was removed, directing a look at the Colonel, meant to imply, "How could you give one of her Ladyship's invitations to a man like this?"

The Colonel received her expressive look without acknowledging that he perceived it, and Block replied, "Oh yes, yes, my Lady! you'll all see me I make no doubt: but you must be sharp indeed, if you know me in the dress I intend to go in."

"If we *did* know you," returned Lady Buckhurst, "we should not speak to you: nobody ever speaks to their acquaintance at a masked ball, at least not by name; such a thing is never heard of as acquaintance acknowledging one another at places of that kind:" and her Ladyship pronounced these sentences with due emphasis upon the leading words in the information she intended to convey to Block, thinking that this instruction might prove a happy method for relieving herself from his assiduities during the evening.

"If you take my advice, Block, you'll only wear a domino," cried the Colonel: "it is a damned bore to a man that ain't up to all the goes of the thing, to sport a character."

"Aye, aye, so it may be," returned Block, "for them who assume a character that they know nothing about; but I shall take one upon me that I shall be quite at home in I promise you."

Afraid lest he should ask for a place in their carriage, her Ladyship took an opportunity to apologize for four being as many as her coach would contain in masquerade-dresses, and then left

the room with Amica to commence the business of the toilet.

Block was equally uncommunicative to the gentlemen with regard to the character he meant to sustain, or rather assume, as he had been to the ladies; and after about another hour's quick circulation of the bottle, one of Lady Buckhurst's footmen having called him a coach, he directed himself to be driven to his hotel, in order to arrange and provide for his equipment; having been informed by the Colonel that twelve o'clock was a very good hour to go to Lady Dellaval's.

Sir Benjamin's madeira was as good as Block's own: he had taken a very potent quantity of it, and made his *exit* from Hanover-square in spirits rather too high for the correct support of any character, even by a man of very different abilities for an undertaking of the kind to these possessed by poor Jarvis. The Colonel himself had not tasted sparingly of the juice of the grape; and he had just begun, in his *gaïeté de cœur* to tell Maurice, that he had a damned deal better game in view that night than the masquerade; and that in the morning he would put him up

to the glorious sport he had got the scent of, when a note was brought to him by his servant. "Now for it!" he exclaimed, "any thing in moderation, and I am satisfied."—He broke the seal, and on casting his eyes over the contents, the smiles which had before lighted up his countenance were converted into the most sullen gloom: he read it a second time; the contraction of his brow increased. "Hell and devils!" burst from his lips; and having crammed the letter which had provoked this invective into his pocket with one hand, and with the other lifted a bumper of wine to his lips, he said, "Stanton, I have a service to ask of you. Come with me a few minutes into my father's study, while I explain to you what it is, lest we should be interrupted here."

Maurice directly rose in compliance with this request; the Colonel swallowed another bumper, and then led the way to his father's study, into which Maurice followed him; and where we shall for the present leave them, without inquiring what passed after the door of the apartment was shut.

CHAPTER IV.

Nocturnal Revels.

THE habit which Amica had chosen for the evening was merely a light dress adapted to dancing, which partook in some measure of the Grecian *costume*; with certain restrictions in regard to the quantity of drapery of which it was composed, which most women, possessed of her excellent symmetry, would have sacrificed their modesty to their vanity, in omitting: but Amica wisely considered, that while natural grace is the first ornament of woman, a due regard to the feminine delicacy, which it becomes the sex to support, is their greatest recommendation in the eyes of those men whose opinions are worth considering. She had originally intended to have worn her light-brown hair fastened in a knot on the top of her head, without any ornament; but Mr. Leuwitzer's present made a change

in her arrangement, and she now confined her luxuriant tresses on the left side with her diamond sprig.

In the single instance of her masquerade attire, Lady Buckhurst had possessed sufficient sense to be governed by the advice of her daughter; and therefore contented herself with a blue silk domino, which she however directed to be as richly made up as the nature of the habit would allow, out of compliment to Lady Dellaval.

Amica had finished dressing some time before her Ladyship, and on going down into the drawing-room, she found in it Maurice Stanton, who was sitting alone, and who had assumed the simple garb of a hay-maker.

He rose upon Amica's entrance, and regarding her with a smile of admiration, he said, "The difference of style which our fictitious characters for this evening's entertainment exhibit, is as great as that which exists between our real situations in life; as great as is the distinction between the daughter of Lady Buckhurst and the poor little drummer-boy."

"As great as I might have considered it," replied Amica, "if Heaven had not blessed

me, by suffering my mind to be formed under the tutorage of a man who has taught me to regard virtue as the greatest distinction which human beings can possess, and liberality of sentiment as the greatest ornament of the heart. You can by nothing displease me, but by uttering a possibility of my esteem for you ever being changed by any circumstance wherein your honour is not concerned."

"Pardon me, dearest Amica," he returned, taking her hand, and pressing it to his lips as he spoke; "but a mind which is not possessed of more vanity or self-sufficiency than mine, must ever be doubtful of its possession of so great, so exquisite a happiness, as the love of one in whom its existence, its soul is concentered: I will not offend thus again. I am a novice in entertainments of this kind:—does dancing constitute a part of them?"

"The principal part, I believe," replied Amica.

"I hope your hand is disengaged?"

"Not for the two first dances."

"Who is the happy man that is to claim it for that period of felicity?—the Colonel?"

"Oh, no!—I am almost ashamed to tell you.—Yet there can be no shame in being

compelled to dance with an old man," she added smiling, "in an age when the young ones are so negligent of offering themselves to us for partners.—I am engaged to Lady DeHaval's father, Sir Jasper Wormeaten."

Before Maurice could reply, Lady Buckhurst entered the room, and informed them that the coach was at the door, and that it was high time to be going. Maurice accordingly took Amica's hand to lead her to it, and in their way, whispered, "Reserve the two second dances for me."—"Most readily," she replied, and followed her mother into the carriage. They had been some minutes seated in it before the Colonel joined them, and he then appeared merely in a domino.

"Why, goodness me!" cried Lady Buckhurst, "how comes it you ain't dressed in some character or another? I could as soon have believed Queen Anne was not dead as you going to a masquerade in a domino."

"Characters are a cursed bore," was the reply: "I don't feel up to it to-night.—I'm damned ill."

"Ill, are you?" exclaimed her Ladyship:—"I'm sure if it is any thing of a head-ach, or a fever that is the matter with

you, you are going to the worst of all places to mend it."

Lady Buckhurst received no answer, so became silent.

At length, after much exercise for their patience, they reached the door of Lady Delaval's house. Scarcely had they entered the hall, where their senses were dazzled by the brilliancy of coloured lamps, transparencies, and pillars wound round with glittering laurels, ere a mask, in the habit of a Turk, surprised Lady Buckhurst, by addressing her in her own name, and adding, "Your exquisite daughter looks more like an angel than ever to-night: *J'en suis l'idolâtre.*"

At the sound of these words, her Ladyship exclaimed, "Oh ho! I should know you any where when you speak French, Mr. Valmont."

"Hush! no names here, except in a whisper," returned the Turk, who was, as her Ladyship suspected, Sidney Valmont himself.

"I won't, I won't," she replied; "but I am very glad I've been so lucky as to meet with somebody I know."

Lady Buckhurst and her party, with the exception of the Colonel, who had left them

the minute they had entered the house, were now advancing towards the grand illuminated stair-case, when in their way to it they were assailed by a troop of link-boys, who were each soliciting to be employed to light them up.

"Dear a me!" cried her Ladyship; "I'm surprised such dirty creatures as these should be admitted into a private house."

"You mistake! you mistake!" returned Valmont: "these are only assumed characters. Pass on."

The next objects which attracted her Ladyship's attention, were a couple of constables with their staves in their hands, who were stationed one on each side of the foot of the stairs. "Here are some make-believe constables too, I declare," she remarked.

"Oh no, no, *pardie!* they are real ones, I assure you," cried Valmont.

"Real ones!" echoed Lady Buckhurst: but Sidney was no longer by her side to hear her exclamation, thus she was obliged to confine her surprise to her own breast; and perhaps some of our readers will be as much astonished as she was, to learn that real constables were stationed in the house of a woman of fashion,

on an evening when it will be naturally supposed that none but people of honour were expected as visitors. But true it is, notwithstanding, that there is some defect in the arrangement of these fashionable parties which renders the presence of a peace-officer frequently necessary.

In the last of a magnificent suite of apartments they discovered Lady Dellaval, attired in her Egyptian dress, which outshone in splendor every habit worn by her guests: she was reclining on a couch of tyger-skin, which was placed beneath a canopy of a most fantastic and elegant structure, decorated according to the Egyptian *costume;* in habits corresponding with which appeared round her several of her friends, who had assumed the disguise of her attendants. Her Ladyship was unmasked, which was perhaps the single instance of wisdom which she displayed that night; and this certainly deserved that appellation, as it shewed her to have taken warning by the fate of other donors of *fêtes* similar to her own, who had been sufficiently incautious to mix *incog.* with their guests.

Lady Dellaval having been informed by Valmont (who was upon this occasion one of

her Ladyship's jackalls) which was Amica, came up to her; and, after much friendly salutation, she beckoned towards them a male figure in a white silk domino, and a hat trimmed with silver, and putting her hand into his; she said, "I have now the pleasure of presenting the handsomest woman in the world to the happiest man in it:" and having said this, she retired with a smile, back to her seat.

"The happiest of men," was of course Sir Jasper Wormeaten; who immediately began to pour forth vollies of words, which composed merely the grossest flattery to Amica, and displayed him sufficiently vain to be prepared to receive adulation in return equally ridiculous from her, if she would have condescended to bestow it on him.

Amica's senses were so much occupied by the novelty of the scene she was mixing in, that her attention was very little given to Sir Jasper's rhapsodies; at every groupe of characters which she beheld she stopped, expecting to be entertained by hearing a characteristic conversation abounding with wit and repartee; but she was excessively disappointed at hearing only the most common-place

sentences, equally as well adapted to the park or the play as to a masquerade.

And indeed any one who goes to a masquerade, either private or public, with Amica's expectations, will meet an equal disappointment; wit and humour are in them as scarce articles as they are in all other societies. "Of what then," it will be asked, "do they consist?"—Of human beings crowded together in strange habits, chosen without reflection, and worn without any attempt at supporting the characters which they represent. For instance: young girls in the habits of nuns, whose giddy brains are all agog to take the vows of "love, honour, and obey," rather than the veil; astrologers, who are ignorant of the names of the planets; pilgrims, who will tell you Loretto is in the Holy Land; Esquimaux Indians talking of driving their Yaricos in tandems, and shooting tygers to make them fur pelisses; Jews offering to lead their blooming fair ones to church, and swearing fidelity in the name of their Saviour; sailors, who know not the stem from the stern of a ship. In short, a well-supported character at a masquerade is as singular as a well-supported character in life.

Amica could not forbear expressing her sentiments, and Sir Jasper thus replied to them: "The luxury of a scene like this would be too great, if the mind were regaled as well as the senses; and I confess I am Epicurean enough to prefer the latter. This spot is to me an earthly paradise: I consider myself here in a host of angels, and enjoy ten times the happiness I should do in being thrown into the society of an equal number of the sex I live to adore, with their countenances open to my inspection: for could I view them all, I should doubtless behold some not entirely worthy of the admiration even of a devotee like myself; beneath a mask no man of gallantry can be sufficiently uncharitable to suppose a woman otherwise than beautiful."

Lady Buckhurst and her party had been amongst the last who had entered the rooms, thus shortly after their arrival the dancing began. At the end of the first dance, the Baronet led Amica to a seat, and whilst they were awaiting the commencement of the second, he said, "I find the concealment of person of which we have been talking, a most infinite relief to me; for I recognise here an innu-

merable crowd of females, who, if they knew me, would be piqued at my not offering them my hand for some part of this evening's recreation. It is sometimes equally fatiguing, although we must allow there is a gratification connected with the knowledge, to be a favourite with society as to be neglected by it."

The marked character and unaccountable vanity of the Baronet, rendered him a more entertaining partner to Amica than she had expected to find him; and as she perceived it one of the orders of fashion for old men to be dancing uncrutched, whilst the young ones were lounging about the rooms supporting themselves even in this leisure exercise, upon walking-sticks so closely resembling hedge-stakes, that in their appearance of being designed more for real service than show, they seemed to denote the feeble state of those who carried them; she became better reconciled to the partner whom fate had assigned her in the world turned upside down, of which she was just then a member.

At the conclusion of the second dance, Sir Jasper led her again to a seat; Maurice ad-

vanced and claimed her hand for the next set, and Amica with evident pleasure put it into his. At seeing the satisfaction with which this action was performed by her, and comparing it with the coldness with which she had suffered him to take her hand, when at the beginning of the evening it had been presented to him by Lady Dellaval, Sir Jasper felt an irritating sensation, composed of piqued vanity, and childish jealousy seize upon his mind: he could conceive no mode of revenge (and without an imaginary gratification of this nature his little mind could not be satisfied) but to say, "I am glad to see you provided with a partner, as I need not now scruple to quit you. Lady Charlotte Townley has been sending me repeated messages to come and dance with her; and it would perforate my heart to keep so fine a woman waiting for me an instant longer;" and with these words he departed from the side of Amica.

The two dances, during which Maurice was Amica's partner, formed to them the pleasantest part of the evening, as they were free from restraint, and enlivened by a com-

munication of their good-natured criticisms upon the motley group around them.

At the end of these dances, Colonel Buckhurst, who had taken off his mask, and thrown aside his hat, with his domino hanging loosely upon one shoulder, and drawn up under his other arm, advanced towards the sofa upon which Amica and her partner had just taken their seats, and beckoned to the latter to rise and speak to him.

Amica observed that the Colonel's brow looked clouded either with anxiety or ill humour; and saw that he whispered Maurice closely in the ear, as if he did not wish their conversation to be overheard. She had no desire to learn of what it treated, and therefore kept her seat, till a couple of dominos, who appeared to be bucks of fashion, and not exactly in their *sober* senses, took seats upon the same sofa, and she then rose and joined Maurice; at the moment she came up to him she heard him say, "Have you determined what to do in such a case?"

"I shall set off for Harwich," replied the Colonel; "I have arranged matters for that purpose."

They now both turned towards Amica, and at the same instant a crowd of masks, which appeared by the shouts of laughter which burst from their lips to be encircling some object of general mirth, came pouring into the apartment in which they were standing.

Some time elapsed before they could get a peep into the centre of the group, and they then perceived an upright coffin, which, when they first beheld it, was stationary.

The Colonel's curiosity was inflamed by so striking an object, and pushing his way up to it, he perceived the feet of a man issuing out from the bottom, and a large plate upon the lid upon which was inscribed, "*What yon must all come to.*"

These words were no sooner read, on the entrance of this moving machine into the apartment, by a set of young fellows who were assembled there merely for the sake of quizzing, than they instantly perceived in them food for their tormenting powers; and crowding round the wooden emblem of mortality, "Here, don't you see," exclaimed one, "this is, 'What you must all come to?'—Why don't you obey orders, and rally round

Death's standard?"—"Here we are! here we are!" cried a dozen or two more.—"What does Jack in the box want with us, now we are gathered round him?"

"Will the *dead* gentleman who *lives* in this house, condescend to tell us his commands?" cried one in the dress of a chimney-sweeper, following his sentence by a heavy blow on the top of the coffin with his shovel."

"Or as thee art apparently no longer of this world, wilt thee speak to us by thy *spirit?*" inquired a quaker.

"Spirit!" echoed a smuggler; "if there was not better spirit in every thimble-full I strand, I'd forswear trade."

"If thou hast communication with the Devil, I fear thee not," said a friar, holding up his crucifix, in sign of his courage.

"You'd better not call me out, for I shall terrify you all when I appear," growled a voice within the coffin.

"Save and protect us!" cried a miss in her teens: "I dare say he'll be as dreadful as a modern romance."

"Come!—Why don't you come out if you *are* coming?" was vociferated from every

side, whilst the crowd increased round the object of curiosity.

After some moments thus passed, the voice from within again spoke: "I can't—I can't let myself out, and I verily believe I shall be smothered."

"This is a phenomenon indeed," said a philosopher: "a dead man calling out from his coffin for air."

"That is an *air* I should never have dreamt of!" exclaimed a Jemmy Jumps.

"What a confounded puzzling *case!*" said a counsellor, addressing a brother of the robe.

"Suppose we make it a case of ejectment," replied the other.

"We must take different sides of the *case* for that purpose," rejoined the first speaker and having placed one of his shoulders to the right side of the coffin, whilst his brother placed one to the left side, they quickly overthrew the monument of mortality, which fell on its bottom, and in the fall received a blow, which acted in so happy a manner as to unfasten the spring; which the person within it had not, according to his own account,

been able to loosen; and the lid immediately flew open.

For about half a minute the mirth of the party was turned into surprise, for within the coffin lay extended what appeared the skeleton of a man, and of which the most astonishing part was its great bulk. It drew a sigh as if inhaling the air which was let in upon it by the opening of the lid; and then rising, though not without some difficulty, upon its feet, it stretched out, amidst the crowd, its right arm, which bore a long dart.

"Zounds, here is Death come amongst us!" exclaimed a Merry-Andrew. "We have no match for him here but the doctor: so here, my good friend," seizing hold of a physician in his bush wig and gold-headed cane, and pushing him up to the skeleton, "go and try what you can do with him."

"You are mistaken," replied the doctor; "my art is confined to the *vitals* of man: I have nothing to do with his *bony* part."

"What!" exclaimed a sailor, brandishing his short cudgel as he spoke, "is this Bony-part? Why then, damme! this is the fellow I've been so hugely disappointed in not meet-

ing with half seas over; but since I *have* hove in sight of him, no matter where, we sha'n't part without a grapple now."

The skeleton appeared as if he would have liked to have made his escape, but no passage presented itself for his retreat.

"How say you, Jack?" cried another sailor advancing up to the first. "Have you got alongside the French pirate? if so, here's one of the crew of the Victory, ready to second your fire, my hearty!"

"Avast, Ben! avast!" replied Jack.—"Did not our departed hero drub their whole navy, with only one arm; and do you think I want more than two to heave their Corsican commander overboard?" and with these words, uniting agility and strength in the act, he threw the apparent skeleton across his shoulders, and marched with him along the room in triumph.

The shouts and laughter of the masks now exceeded all bounds; the bystanders applauding the spirit of the English sailor; Jack himself singing "Rule Britannia!" which was chorused by his brother tars; and the poor skeleton, frightened almost into a ghost, exclaiming, that he was a real true-born

Englishman who had only assumed that character in fun, and praying with all his might for mercy.

At length, approaching near the door which opened upon the grand-staircase; and beginning to grow rather weary of his employment, Jack let his *bony* burden fall; and the poor skeleton, ashamed to return to the apartments which were open to the company; and equally alarmed at the idea of entering the streets in his present trim, slipped through the first door which presented itself to his view, and which led him into an elegantly-furnished bed-chamber: where we shall for a while leave the unfortunate Jarvis Block, for he it was who had been the object of the merriment just described, though his adventures in Lady Dellaval's house are not yet concluded; merely stating, that having in some old magazine read an account of a person who had gone to a famous masquerade of the still more famous Mrs. Cornely's in a coffin, and excited much terror and surprise, he had resolved to go thus equipped to Lady Dellaval's; only with the addition of being prepared to emerge from his confinement in the guise of a skeleton, which he considered

would add considerably to the terrific effect. But in the first instance, not having made himself perfectly acquainted how to manage the spring by which the lid was to be opened, we have seen him upon the point of being smothered; and in the second, by the want of a little ready wit in his own defence, we have seen him on his escape from the coffin, upon the point of being shaken, and bruised into a jelly; we shall not therefore leave him without subject for meditation, nor devoid of cause for gratitude, that his fate was not worse than it proved,

CHAPTER V.

The Morning advances.

ABOUT half past two o'clock, the supper-rooms, decorated in a most superb style of Eastern magnificence, were thrown open.

We have already repeatedly seen that no event in the Colonel's life possessed any interest for Amica; and probably the declaration which she had heard him make that evening of his contingent intention of setting out for Harwich, would not have recurred to her memory, had not Maurice Stanton appeared to have been in some degree concerned in the circumstances which had produced this reply; and as the most trifling transaction immediately gained consequence with her in proportion as he appeared involved in it, she could not forbear mak-

ing some inquiry of him concerning the Colonel's journey.

"The Colonel is not going to make any journey that I know of," replied Maurice, with some degree of hesitation.

"It is unusual to perceive you so much in his confidence as you appear to night," returned Amica; and before Maurice could reply to her observation, she was addressed by Sidney Valmont, who informed her, that he was commissioned by Lady Dellaval to tell her, that she had reserved her a seat near herself at the supper table. "Give me leave to conduct you to it," he added, drawing her arm through his as he spoke; "her Ladyship says, you have absolutely deserted her all night, and she is quite *au desespoir* till she sees you again."

Knowing Valmont to be exercising the authority of a steward to Lady Dellaval's party, Maurice felt himself compelled to resign Amica, but followed her to her seat.

Amica found that the place which had been reserved for her was at a short distance from Lady Dellaval, and next to

Sir Jasper; she was constrained to accept it; but it afforded her some relief to find that there was room for Maurice on her other side.

The Baronet appeared entirely to have forgotten Lady Charlotte Townly; he seemed incapable of beholding any one but Amica.—His gallant attentions to her were unbounded; for the first time in her life she felt shame caused by the actions of another; she considered that the eyes of all the table were perhaps upon her, and ridiculing her for being the subject of the old beau's civilities;—she was not sufficiently a pupil of the great world to be acquainted that at places of this nature, persons are too much occupied with themselves, and their own plans, to have any leisure to watch their neighbours.—Anxious that he should at least divide his attentions between her, and the lady on his other side, she assumed courage to say, "The lady on your left hand I am sure must think me a most unwarrantable monopolizer of your civilities; do pray, free me from the self-reproach of seeing her neglected."

"My dear Madam!" ejaculated Sir Jasper, in a whisper, "she is single, and thirty-five; for compassion's sake bid me do any thing but turn from beholding the Medicean Goddess, to worship a Sybil."

To reply, was to enter farther into the labyrinth from which she wished to disentangle herself, she therefore remained silent.

At supper, the unmasking had become general;—the exercise of the dance had embellished the cheeks of Amica with a bloom which outrivalled all the efforts of art in most of the females around her; who had in dissipation lost the roses of nature, and flown to the refuge of the cosmetic;—indeed the loveliness of her appearance was such that she must have inflamed the bosom of a colder man than Sir Jasper Wormeaten.

Lost in the contemplation of that assemblage of charms which formed the beauteous envelope of a heart, more eminent still in every feminine grace, and virtue;—a heart which had declared itself

devoted to him, sat Maurice Stanton, whose appearance rendered him equally fascinating in the eyes of the female sex, as Amica was in those of the men:—The face of Maurice was not remarkably handsome, but his form was proportioned according to the most excellent symmetry, and his deportment of the most graceful nature; his countenance was expressive of animation and manly sense; his eyes were of a vivid and piercing black; his dark brown hair curled in short ringlets on his forehead; and the active share which he had taken in the pleasures of the evening, had called into his cheeks a lively colour, which gave additional expression to his eye.

Lady Dellaval caught his features through her glass, and having contemplated them for some moments, with a most bewitching smile she challenged him to join her in a glass of wine.

Shortly after the female part of the company rose from the table, and on returning to the dancing-room, Lady Dellaval took the arm of Amica, and strolling with her about the apartments,

she said, "Well, my dear girl, you have made a most decided conquest—Sir Jasper is completely dying for you."

"For me, madam!" replied Amica with a smile. "Honour bright, my love, I assure you," returned her Ladyship, "I never in my life saw any thing equal to the spirits with which you inspired him in the dance to-night.—Beyond the possibility of a doubt, he'll be laid up with the sciatica to-morrow, and very likely be confined by it to his sofa for the next three or four months.—Well, what say you, don't you think he'd make you an excellent husband?"

The idea of the excellence of a husband who was to be confined by the three or four months together to his sofa with the sciatica, brought on by his own folly in attempting an exercise equally unfit for his years and his health, caused Amica rather more than to smile.

"I know what your sentiments are, exactly," rejoined Lady Dellaval; "you think it is impossible that you could love him as you would do a handsome young

fellow of your own age;—all that is very natural, my dear; but there are other things besides love to be considered while we live in this world of false ideas;—it can't be expected that you can adore a man of sixty, like a youth of twenty; but still your happiness may materially depend on your making as good a wife as you are able, to a man of that age."

Lady Dellaval paused, and Amica fearing to express herself too freely upon the subject if she ventured a reply, did not hazard one at all.

"Why, you know, my dear," continued her Ladyship, "the Buckhurst, are nobody; he is merely one of Margaret Nicholson's knights—to be sure he is in parliament; so are many men that never saw the west end of the town till they came to take their seats;—monosyllable senators, that like the spell-bound Fatima in the play, never get beyond a yes, or a no.—The Colonel, to be sure, is a man of fashion, and gives some consequence to the family; but then you are not his sister; your name is not even Buckhurst.—It is really a pity, with your excellent person,

that you are not somebody;—my father is a baronet of very ancient descent; you would rank high as his wife."

To the great relief of Amica, their conversation was here broken off by the hasty approach of Lady Buckhurst:—But before we listen to her Ladyship, it appears necessary to give something like an explanation of the motive which could actuate Lady Dellaval in desiring the second marriage of her father;—and she really did desire it, although Amica could scarcely induce herself to consider what she had said to her on the subject, as any thing more than the overflowing of her naturally high spirits.

Notwithstanding Sir Jasper's professions to the contrary, Lady Dellaval was well acquainted that he had made many unsuccessful attempts to enter a second time into the holy state of matrimony.—Every disappointment which he had met with in his advances towards the heart of any woman of honor, he had for some years past been in the habit of repaying to himself, by purchasing the favour of some Italian singer, some public dancer, or somebody

equally as expensive; who had converted him into her dupe, and made so heavy drains upon his purse, as frequently to have put his affairs to material embarrassments.

On this knowledge it was that Lady Dellaval acted; the world reported her to be already sufficiently rich; but she who was undoubtedly the best judge of her own affairs, had reasons which were not publickly known, for wishing her father's property to suffer as little dimunition as possible, before it descended to her; and for this end she wished him married, considering it was more to his interest to get him married to any body with the hope of his remaining constant to her; and with a good grace to barter the certain loss of the settlement which he would assign to his wife, for the extravagant annuities, on which if he remained unmarried, she was convinced it would be impossible to restrain him from wasting his fortune.

Her Ladyship had not the remotest idea of Amica's affections being already bestowed; and judging that her father's title and elegant style of life, were sufficient to captivate any young girl's heart, whose

sole object in marriage she supposed to be that of settling herself in as elevated a situation as possible; and finding that the first sight of Amica had rivetted in chains of passion the heart of her father, she entertained a serious wish that an union might be effected between them, and addressed to Amica the real sentiments of her heart.

Amica's ideas it cannot want to be said were of an infinitely different nature; but before she had begun to express them, we have already seen that Lady Buckhurst's presence prevented her reply.—"Come, my dear," said her Ladyship, speaking in Amica's ear, "do let us go home now, it is almost half an hour past five; I never sat up so late in my life, and I begin to feel quite sleepy, and chilly;—I am sure I should not wonder if you were ill yourself to-morrow."

Amica replied, "that she was ready to depart," and followed her mother's steps, who moved towards the door;—"I wish," said her Ladyship, "we had either the Colonel or Mr. Stanton here to get our carriage up for us," (stopping near the door,

and looking round her,) "one might as well look for a needle in a *bottle* of hay, as for any body we want to find here. —I think it ain't quite so civil of both of them to have run away from us just at the time we want to be going home;—— what shall we do?"

Just as she spoke these words, a person in a handsome green livery with gold e-paulets, a gold laced hat, gold headed cane, and a mask on his face, advanced, and said, "Allow me to have the honour of inquiring for your carriage, Madam;— whose shall I call?"

"Lord, Sir!" returned Lady Buckhurst; "I see by your mask you are one of the company, and I can't think of troubling you to go out in the cold."

"Oh, Madam," returned the mask, "I have all the evening been in search of a lady's place; and I am quite delighted at finding an employment."

"Well, Sir, you are very polite, I am sure," replied her Ladyship, "if you will be so good; it is Lady Buckhurst's carriage I want."

The elegant footman bowed, and ran down stairs to execute his commission.

"What a genteel, obliging young gentleman that is," said her Ladyship, "I am sure it is very fortunate we have met with such a civil person, as our own gentlemen have left us;—If they come to us before the carriage gets up, it is all very well, but I shan't wait a minute for them, I can tell them, when it is once announced."

That the Colonel was regardless of the duties of protection of which her mother and herself at that moment stood in need, Amica was not at all surprised; where Maurice could be, that he had thus deserted her, she was entirely at a loss to guess.

In less than a quarter of an hour, the mask in livery returned with information that Lady Buckhurst's carriage was the second in waiting; and her Ladyship returning him many thanks for his civility, begged Amica to lose no time in going down stairs, lest it should be compelled to drive off before they reached the hall.

"With your leave, madam," said the mask, I will offer my services to the young lady, she may require more protection than yourself in pressing through the crowd."

"Thank you, Sir, thank you," replied Lady Buckhurst, "that is very wisely observed.—I see you are used to the ways of the world."

"I should else be very unfit for my occupation," he returned; and presenting his arm to Amica, he led her down by it; and in a few moments more her mother and herself were seated in their carriage.

CHAPTER VI.

Misfortunes never come single.

A SLIGHT cause for mortification sinks deeper into the heart of one who has not enjoyed the benefits of a liberal education, than does a stronger one for exciting a sensation of the opposite nature.—Thus in their way home Lady Buckhurst appeared entirely to have forgotten the amusement she had derived from the fête, in reflecting on the ill compliment which she considered Maurice Stanton to have paid her daughter, and herself, in not having attended them home again, as he had been of their party at setting out.

Like Amica, we shall form no opinion of his conduct, till we hear his defence. —To form our judgement on hearing only one side of any question, is like attempting to weigh substances upon a beam

which has a scale at only one of its ends.

On reaching Hanover square they found it wanted only a few minutes of seven; her Ladyship declared that she could not go to bed till she had had a cup of either coffee or tea, and entered the drawing room directing some to be brought her.——Sir Benjamin they found had returned from the house between one and two, and after his bird and bottle, had retired to court the embraces of the drowsy god.

Her Ladyship had determined on tea, considering it a more refreshing beverage than coffee, and whilst putting the leaves into the pot, for it was a part of her domestic economy never to suffer any body but herself to make tea in her own house, she said, "I'll put in a good deal, and make it strong, for I think every body must be coming away from the masquerade by this time; and so no doubt bu we shall have the Colonel and Mr. Stanton here in a few minutes, and they'll be glad of some with us."

The Colonel, it must be understood, had the day before quarelled with his landlady, and quitted his lodgings in Bond-street; he had already procured others in the same neighbourhood, but there being impediments to his taking possession of them till the following Sunday, he had in the mean while taken up his abode in his father's house.—For this reason her Ladyship expected to see him return with Maurice Stanton.

Whilst sipping her first cup of tea, Lady Buckhurst imagined she heard a knock at the outer door; and a servant shortly after entering the drawing room, she inquired whether Colonel Buckhurst or Mr. Stanton was returned?

"They are both gone out again, Ma'am," was the reply.

"Gone out again!" echoed Lady Buckhurst, "Why—what do you mean—have they been home this morning?"

The servant replied that they had both arrived at the house about an hour before her Ladyship, and having changed their masquerade habits for their morning dresses, had

ordered a post chaise from one of the nearest livery stables, and driven away in it together.

"And where did they order themselves to be set down?" inquired her Ladyship.

"I really don't know, Ma'am," answered the servant, "I let them out; but Mr. Stanton went up to the post-boy, and gave him his orders in a low voice, so that I did not hear what he said."

The servant left the room.

"Well, I never heard of such a freak in my life," cried her Ladyship, "as going out in a post chaise at this time of the morning without even resting themselves an hour or two in bed after such a fatigueing night.—It is no business of mine, but I believe nobody ever had such odd whims as Colonel Buckhurst, or at least indulged in them so freely;—I thought Mr. Stanton had been a different kind of man."

Amica thought so too; and feared that his absence was not voluntary—but entirely at a loss in what light to regard it, she forebore to utter any observations upon

what had just been communicated to them by the servant—"I shall set off for Harwich," she had overheard the Colonel say; but she considered that she had heard his declaration in a manner which did not authorise her to repeat it, and therefore remained silent.

"Why, my dear child!" exclaimed Lady Buckhurst, fixing her eyes stedfastly on Amica, as she placed before her a second cup of tea; "Why, where is your diamond sprig?"

"Is it not in my hair, Madam?" she replied, fixing her hand mechanically on the part where she expected to find it; and was surprised by its not meeting the touch.

"You have lost it," rejoined her Ladyship." What will Mr. Leuwitzer say!—and what will you say for yourself, for having been so careless about a thing of such value;—a REAL diamond sprig,"

"I must have lost it upon the stairs at Lady Dellaval's," replied Amica, "for I recollect, that as I was descending them, the mask in the habit of a footman, who

accompanied me, told me that my hair was falling down, and fastened for me a comb, which he said would in another minute have dropped out."

"And how could you be so silly," ejaculated Lady Buckhurst, "when he told you so, as not to feel for your sprig, the first thing you did, and see that it was safe?—bless me, child, you have no thought at all—none in the world."

She immediately rang the bell with rapidity, and violence; when the servant appeared, "Oh dear!" she cried, "Miss Dimick has had such a loss; go directly and see if you can find a diamond sprig in the coach, and bid John and Thomas run as fast as ever they can to my Lady Dellaval's, and desire all her servants to help them to look if it can't be found upon the stairs, or any where about the rooms; you may say Lady Buckhurst will give any body that finds it half-a-crown, for it is real diamond."

A smile stole over the features of the servant at this proposition.

"I will give any body five guineas who restores it to me," said Amica.

"Five guineas, child!" exclaimed Lady Buckhurst.

"Oh yes, Ma'am, willingly treble that sum out of respect to the valued friend who presented me with it."

The servant bowed to Amica, and was out of the room in an instant.

"I wish the Colonel was at home that we might have his opinion upon what is best to be done in this business," said her Ladyship.—"I declare I have a great mind to go and wake Sir Benjamin, and ask his advice upon it."

"Oh no, pray do not," replied Amica, who always felt upon terms of so great restraint with her father-in-law, as to dread the idea of his being disturbed out of his sleep for any affair of her's—"pray do not, Madam," she repeated.

"I don't know that it would be of much use, indeed," rejoined Lady Buckhurst, "for I question whether he has slept off the effects of his last night's bottle yet—well, if the sprig be found, and pray Heaven it may, you shall never go out in it again with my good will, without having it sewed either to your

hair, or to your bandeau, or to some part of your head."

In the course of a few minutes Lady Buckhurst's waiting-woman entered the room with intelligence that the diamond sprig was not in the coach, and that all the male servants were gone to Lady Dellaval's in search of it.

Amica besought her mother to go to bed, promising to send her word if any success attended the servant's researches: her Ladyship declared that she knew it would be quite impossible for her to sleep till her mind was made easy about the sprig; and they accordingly continued sitting in the drawing-room.

Nearly an hour elapsed without the return of any servants; and her Ladyship's anxiety increased, as she construed their absence into a very unpromising omen.—Almost every five minutes she had looked at her watch, and had just said, "I declare it is almost half after eight, we shall have Sir Benjamin up in an hour, or a little more,"—when a noise below, as of the feet of several persons moving rapidly about, and whispering, or at least talking

in low voices, attracted her attention," "Hark!" said her Ladyship, "are those any of the servants come back?"

Eager in her desire of recovering Mr. Leuwitzer's present, Amica sprang from her seat, and running out of the room, leant over the bannisters, from whence part of the hall could be seen;—at the foot of the stairs, upon the point of ascending them, a group of figures met her sight; but one alone was recognised by her; and this was Maurice Stanton, whom she beheld with his waistcoat and neckcloth dyed in blood: she uttered a loud shriek, and sunk senseless to the ground.

When recollection returned to Amica, she found herself extended on a sofa in the drawing-room, and surrounded by Lady Buckhurst and several female servants.—"Where is he?—Where is he?" she wildly exclaimed.

"In bed, my dear, in bed? and the surgeon is with him, and there is such work," replied her Ladyship.

"But he lives?—he is not dead?—he lives, does he not?" rejoined Amica.

"Oh yes, he is alive now," returned Lady Buckhurst, "but there is no saying how it may turn out—such shameful murderous doings!"

At the sound of these words, the spirits of Amica were again sinking into inanimation, but they were recalled by the appearance of Maurice Stanton himself, who entered the apartment, and advancing hastily up to the sofa, took her hand in his, and exclaimed, "Dear Amica, how is it with you?" His waistcoat and linen had been changed, and there were now no stains of blood remaining upon him.

Amica fixed her eyes on him in silence, with an expression of mingled delight and astonishment.

"Did you suppose that it was I who was wounded?" asked Maurice.

Amica endeavoured to speak; she intended to say, "Thank God, that you are not," but a flood of tears prevented her utterance.

"Colonel Buckhurst has been unfortunately wounded this morning in the shoulder, in a duel," Maurice continued,

"I supported him in my arms in our way hither from Hyde-park; and it was his blood which you saw on me when we first entered the house."

"Yes," exclaimed Lady Buckhurst, "the Colonel is wounded through and through by a Frenchman, and God alone knows, as I said before, what will be the end of it—however I have had Sir Benjamin called, and he is getting up."

A person of much more importance to the Colonel's recovery, at that moment entered the room; it was the Surgeon who had attended the duellists to the place of appointment, and who informed the party assembled that he had succeeded in extracting the ball.

To their inquiries relative to his opinion of his patient's chance of recovery, he replied, that as the Colonel possessed a strong constitution, he entertained very little fear of his eventual safety, but was apprehensive that he would endure much pain, and that his confinement would be of long duration.—He added, "that he had administered to him a composing draught—

it was therefore necessary," he said, "that he should be kept as quiet as possible," and promising to see him again in a couple of hours, he left the house.

CHAPTER VII.

Explanation.

We shall avail ourselves of the interval of his absence for laying before our readers, the particulars of the duel which had been attended with so disagreeable a consequence to one of the parties.

They are not strangers to the hasty and ardent passion which took possession of the heart of Colonel Buckhurst at his first sight of *La Belle Emigrée,* who was employed as the embroideress of Lady Dellaval's Egyptian dress; nor of the promise which her Ladyship made, to give him information of her name and place of abode, as soon as he should bring her the present of a diamond buckle and feather.

A man of gallantry suffers no obstacles which are surmountable by human means, to stand in the way of the gratification

of his unprincipled desires; accordingly having procured a present, answerable at least in appearance to the demands of her Ladyship, (for we have already said that the diamonds of which the present was manufactured, were only excellent imitations of the real stones; an additional instance that fashionable friends only keep up the appearance of promises) he carried them to her on the Saturday morning preceding her fête, requiring in return, a full account of all she knew concerning the lovely French woman.

Lady Dellaval informed him that her name was Le Blanc; that she resided on a second floor in an obscure street in the vicinity of Leicester-square, adding, that she was sure the poor woman was in very abject circumstances.

Within an hour after the receipt of this intelligence, the Colonel proceeded to the house to which her Ladyship had directed him; a knowledge of the number led him infallibly to the right dwelling, and a convenient brass lettered plate upon one of the door-posts, by the side of nearly half a dozen bell-handles, directed

him which to pull, in order to call down the lodgers on the second floor:—In a few minutes time, a dirty little girl, opened the door; "Are you Mrs. Le Blanc's maid, my dear?"—asked the Colonel;—for he was a pupil of Cherry's, and knew that every man who hopes for success in an intrigue, "must bribe the chamber-maid that betrays him, and court the footman that laughs at him;" so directly called *her*, "my dear," whom he would scarcely have uttered one sentence to have saved from crucifixion, had she been any body else's servant, for the sake of the mistress to whom she belonged.

The girl replied in the affirmative, and the Colonel desired her to shew him up stairs—In a small room which seemed to be appropriated to all the purposes of life, but that of retiring from its toils, sat the object of his passion, employed in making some artificial flowers; the materials for composing which were hanging on lines tied across the apartment; where they were placed to dry after having been dipped in the various dyes requisite

to render them of use to their industrious mistress.

Madame Le Blanc rose from her employment, and, with all the natural ease and politeness of a French woman,. requested to know the Colonel's commands. The Colonel replied that he had been informed, that she sold feathers and flowers, and that he wished to purchase some;—Madame Le Blanc was infinitely better acquainted with the English language, than was Colonel Buckhurst with the French, but that is not saying much for the knowledge possessed on either side, and there was some difficulty in their communication.

In one corner of the chimney sat an ancient female habited in the French costume, whose manners appeared peculiarly stiff and courtly, and who kept eying the Colonel with an expression of the utmost vigilance and keenness.

Looking carelessly into the box of flowers which Madame Le Blanc presented to him for inspection, the Colonel inquired what was the price of them all?

"Of them all, Monsieur?" echoed Madame Le Blanc.—"Oh, yes, all, *oui, oui*, all," replied the Colonel.

Something above five pounds proved to be the amount of all the box contained. The Colonel put a ten pound note into her hand, out of which he refused to take any change, and telling her he should call and buy some more of her very soon, perhaps the next day, contrived to squeeze her hand at putting the money into it, and departed satisfied that he should by degrees arrive at the summit of his wishes.

The following day, being Sunday, he felt some hesitation about repeating his visit, as he could not with any degree of plausibility make a second excuse of purchasing either flowers or feathers again so soon, especially on a day on which it did not appear likely they were to be worn. The collection which he had bought, had been sent carefully packed to his lodgings, and there they still stood, unpacked by him.

On the Monday, however, his impatience to behold the fair emigrée carried him thither before noon; the same girl who had before admitted him into the house ushered him up stairs—the apartment appeared, if possible, in greater dissorder than before; the fire was dying out in the stove, and there was no person in the room.—In the course of a few minutes Madame Le Blanc entered from an inner chamber, apologizing for her dress, she said, "that her husband's mother," (at the sound of the word husband, something like a twinge of dissatisfaction, seized the Colonel in the heart, but he did not suffer it to appear that he felt any symptom of the kind, and Madame Le Blanc proceeded) "her husband's mother," she said, "whom he had seen sitting in the *fauteuil*, the last time he had done her the honor to call, had been very ill all night, almost dying they feared, and she had been watching by her"

The Colonel requested to look at some muslin cravats; Madame Le Blanc replied, "that she did not sell them."—"You must get some muslin, and make me some

then," he replied, "I shall be the happiest fellow alive with some linen made by your beautiful hands," and taking hold of each of hers in his, he imprinted on them both a kiss.

Madame Le Blanc withdrew her hands, and saying that if he would send some muslin, she would thankfully make it up for him, begged him to excuse her then, as she could not longer leave her mother; the Colonel endeavoured to detain her; but she slipped from him, and retired into the chamber.

At her mistresses command, as he supposed, and as was doubtless the case, the girl appeared to shew him out; he was compelled accordingly to depart, or be guilty of an intrusion which might ruin his future prospects;—as he followed her down the first flight of stairs, he reflected on the mention which Madame Le Blanc had made of her husband's mother;—a husband he considered might prove a serious obstacle to his happiness; but then he considered likewise that her husband

might be dead, although his mother was still alive.

Upon the second flight of stairs they were met by a man whose dress and countenance denoted him to be a foreigner; on his features were pourtrayed a dignity, and frigidity of feeling, although his dress bespoke poverty, if not extreme indigence.—He fixed his eye sternly on the Colonel as they met; made a slight obeisance, and continued to ascend the stairs.

"Who was that man?" asked Colonel Buckhurst, of his conductress, when they were arrived at the door which opened into the street.

"My master, Sir," replied the girl.

"What! Madame Le Blanc's husband?" asked the Colonel.

"Yes, *Meseer* Le Blan*k*," answered she.

"They don't appear to be very rich people," rejoined the Colonel.

"Oh dear heart, no!" returned the girl, "they were all forced to run away from France, and leave all they had behind them, because the French King,

poor gentleman, was killed, as I have understood—they are poor, and distressed enough I am certain; and how they are ever to pay the doctor they had to old madam last night, I can't think."

A bell, which Molly knew to be her summons, now sounding, she shut the door upon the Colonel, and ran to attend it.

But the Colonel had, as he thought, heard enough; he had both read, and been told, of the easy tempers of French husbands; of the lively dispositions of French wives; the inability of both sexes to endure poverty, or at least their want of firmness in holding out against any amelioration of circumstances which presents itself to their relief, in whatever guise it may come drest; and fully impressed with the idea that the unfortunate Le Blancs were exactly Human Beings of this forlorn and pitiable nature, he resolved without further hesitation to send the lady a carte blanch in the morning.

When the morning arrived, he changed his opinion about sending it, and resolved to call once more at the emigrant's lodg-

ings, and put it into the hands of Madame Le Blanc herself. The same girl opened to him the door, but peremptorily refused to suffer his going up stairs; the old lady, she said, was very bad, almost at the point of death; and her master had charged her to deny every one admission.

"If she is dying," thought the Colonel, "the greater will be their want of money to defray the expences of her funeral; I shall be sure of success."

He directly returned to Hanover-square, for we have already said, that he had quitted his Bond-street lodgings on the preceding day; and having composed as tender an epistle as *he* was capable of, he dispatched one of his grooms with it to Madame Le Blanc's apartments, directing him to deliver it at the door, and come away.

Our readers will doubtless recollect the high spirits in which the Colonel appeared on the morning of Lady Dellaval's masquerade; that Lady Buckhurst attributed them to his anticipation of the fête; and that he, to her great astonishment, declared he had almost forgotten that it was to take

place that day; and they will now perceive that his animation proceeded from the security with which he looked forward to the reception of a favourable answer to his billet-doux. When Maurice Stanton and himself were left together after dinner by the departure of Jarvis Block, his heart being open with the double effects of the wine and anticipated delight; he had just begun to inform his companion, that he had better game in view for that evening than the masquerade, when a note was brought to him, which the instant he received it, he knew to be the paper that contained his fate.

But what was his mortification, and surprise, on breaking the seal to find, not as he expected, a tender appeal to his feelings, written by the hand of the fair Frenchwoman, with a declaration of her readiness to accept one, two, or more thousands, as her modesty and moderation might have suggested to her, at his hands, for the relief of her husband and herself; but the following words which were succeeded by the signature of Jean Guillaume

Le Blanc, which doubtless meant the husband himself.

"Sir,

"Although you behold us, by our "attachment to an unjustly martyred "monarch, driven from our native land, "and experiencing in a foreign country "the sad privation of those comforts to "which we have before been accustomed; "we thank God that our sentiments are "not sunk with our fortunes—that Antoinette Le Blanc still considers the "preservation of her honour superior to "any amelioration of her circumstances; "and that her husband still retains in his "present humiliating situation, sufficient "pride to regard the revenging an insult "offered to her as his first duty.—I will "in person reply to your billet to-morrow morning at seven o'clock at—"in Hyde-Park—to which place I shall "be accompanied by a friend.

"J. G. Le Blanc."

The meaning intended to be conveyed was too plain to allow the Colonel to hesitate upon it for a single moment;

and having engaged Maurice as his second, he endeavoured to wait with as much composure as possible, the hour of trial.

In the course of the evening he dispatched a note to a surgeon of eminence, requesting his attendance at the place of appointment; and at about five on the following morning, having stolen away with Maurice from the masquerade, unperceived by Lady Buckhurst and Amica, they returned to Hanover-square, where they threw off their masks, and dresses, and proceeded towards Hyde-Park, in the hired chaise, as Sir Benjamin's footman has already related.

"I shall set off for Harwich," Amica had overheard the Colonel say, in reply to the demand of Maurice; and it will now easily be guessed that the question to which this was the answer, was an inquiry whether he had resolved what course to pursue, in case his antagonist should fall.

Monsieur Le Blanc and his friend, who was a countryman of his own, were just arrived upon the spot of rendezvous, when Maurice and the Colonel reached it—the surgeon was also true to his appointment,

The seconds having paced the ground, it alone remained to be decided who was to have the first fire. For this advantage each, upon different pleas, for some minutes contended; and it was at length agreed that they should fire both together.—The signal being given, the awful triggers were drawn—the Colonel's bullet passed through the air without effect; that of Monsieur Le Blanc lodged in the right shoulder of his opponent.

Colonel Buckhurst staggered a few steps, and fell into the arms of his second, who with the assistance of the surgeon carried him back to the chaise.

We have already been apprized of their arrival in Hanover-square, and shall therefore now proceed again regularly in our story; and we wish that in giving that faithful copy of nature which a history of Human Beings demands from our pen, we were not compelled to dwell upon the characters of those who conceive it no sin to attempt the seduction of a wife, or to expose their lives, which are not in their own keeping, to the chance of an antagonist's fire. There is only one consideration which makes us

amends for the necessity, which is, that, as in painting, light would not appear with half its brilliancy, but for the shade to which it is contrasted; so, in the history of Human Beings, we hope the virtues of the good will operate with double force, by being opposed to the vices of the bad.

CHAPTER VIII.

Irritation and Anxiety.

ABOUT three quarters of an hour after the summons to rise had been sent to Sir Benjamin, he entered the drawing-room in his morning gown and slippers, rubbing his eyes with both his hands, and apparently still more asleep than awake.

The servants being all well acquainted with the Knight's extravagant fondness for his only son, and the violent irritability of his temper, had merely repeated to him her Ladyship's request to him to rise, and left it to her to explain to him the cause.

"What's the matter?" he exclaimed, staring upon the assembled group. "Why you have not been in bed all night—have you? What am I wanted for? Is any body dead?"

"No, my dear! no:—he's not dead," replied her Ladyship. "Pray don't fluster and

flurry yourself; all will go well with good nursing, and good physic, and so on, I dare say: such things will happen to men of honour."

"Zounds!" vociferated the Knight, beginning to tremble from crown to toe: "you don't mean that the Colonel—that my son—that he has been—Let me see him directly!—Where is he?—Where is he?" and he was bursting out of the room in search of him, but was prevented by Maurice, who entreated him not to go abruptly into his son's presence; nor at all for the present, as it had been the particular desire of the surgeon that he should not on any account be disturbed.

Upon this confirmation of his fears, Sir Benjamin no longer entertained the power to move, if he still felt the inclination, and sunk into the nearest chair, almost gasping for breath: "Tell me all! tell me all!—only say he is not dead," cried the Knight.

Of this Maurice in the most positive terms assured him, as also that there was every chance of the Colonel's being pronounced free from dangerous symptoms on the return of the surgeon, which he told him would take place in a very short time; and having given

him some ease by this declaration, he proceeded at his desire to give him the particulars relating to the duel.

"What a brute! what a rascal!" exclaimed Sir Benjamin, ere the story was yet concluded, to turn against the life of a man that offered to become his benefactor, when he was driven into a foreign country in distress!—Oh, damn the French! there is not an honest man in their whole nation; and instead of receiving such rascals into our kingdom, it is a pity, aye and a shame, that government did not hang them all by the heels on the shore where they first landed."

"Aye, so I say," cried her Ladyship: "a fine pass the times are come to indeed when a French *remigrant* is to challenge an English Colonel in his own land; and not only a Colonel, but the son of a British parliament-man too! If you don't lay the affair before the house, Sir Benjamin, and demand redress from the nation, I say you are to blame."

"How should I lay it before the house?" demanded Sir Benjamin peevishly.

"How?" replied his wife, misunderstanding the application of the word *How?*—"why in one of your speeches."

"I make no speeches there," returned he, the pettishness of his tone increasing: "if I got upon my legs, nobody would listen to me any more than they would to you."

The pursuance of this dialogue was interrupted by the entrance of one of the footmen, who brought information that every room at Lady Dellaval's had been searched again and again for the diamond sprig, but without success.

Lady Buckhurst's plaints and wailings were now all turned to the loss her daughter had sustained; and as she expressed her lamentations in higher notes than agreed with the present state of her husband's nerves, he left the room, requesting Maurice to accompany him to his study.

They had not long entered this apartment ere Maurice perceived the surgeon coming across the square towards the house, and went out into the hall to meet him, as did Sir Benjamin.

The surgeon requested to be allowed to go alone to the Colonel's chamber, promising in a very short time to bring them down correct information of the state in which he found his patient. In a few minutes they received a

summons from him to go up themselves: this Sir Benjamin, with expressions of the greatest delight, obeyed. Having entered the apartment, the surgeon permitted Sir Benjamin to approach the bed of his son, who extending his left hand towards his father, shook one of his in it, and said, "I shall do very well, Sir: I shall do." He repeated the same ceremony, accompanied by the same words, to Maurice, and they were then desired to retire.

The surgeon went down with them: to Sir Benjamin's inquiries he replied, that he could not, till twenty-four more hours had elapsed, declare the Colonel absolutely free from danger, but that he firmly believed him so at the present moment.

"Do, pray, Sir—do all you can for him," cried Sir Benjamin, catching the surgeon's hands in his. "Come half-a-dozen times a day, if it is in your power, to see him: you shall be well paid for your trouble I promise you."

Sir Benjamin requested the surgeon to sit with him a few minutes; and whilst he remained, he questioned him, "Whether there was no method, no law, by which he could

punish the French villain who had wounded his son?"

The surgeon replied, that knowing his antagonist to be severely wounded, Monsieur Le Blanc had doubtless secreted himself in some place of retirement, where he would remain till he learnt the event of the Colonel's hurt. "But," added he, "as the duel was fought in every respect agreeably to the laws of honour, and as I have already informed you that there are no serious apprehensions for the fate of your son, you cannot, as a gentleman, be justified in taking any steps against a man thus situated."

"What not against a Frenchman?—a rascally Frenchman!—Does not that alter the case?" cried Sir Benjamin.

"Every man who is admitted into this country as a friend, enjoys the same rights as if he were himself an Englishman," answered the surgeon.

"It is time we should grow more careful whom we admit as friends then, since we find the snakes will turn upon their benefactors," replied Sir Benjamin; "and all my hope is,

that this fellow may rot in a jail for his obstinacy and ingratitude."

When the surgeon was gone, and Maurice again left alone with the Knight, he was thus addressed by him: "I am greatly obliged to you, Mr. Stanton; greatly obliged indeed, by the friendship you have shewn for my son, in having been his second in this affair, and taken care of him home, and helped to put him into his bed yourself; all which I take very kindly of you, indeed—I assure you I do; and you would much increase the obligation, if you would write a line to Mr. Leuwitzer, stating that it would be a great satisfaction to me, if he would suffer you to remain with us a few days longer, just to see what turn the Colonel's wound may take. If you will prepare a letter, one of my grooms shall ride over to Richmond with it, and deliver it into Mr. Leuwitzer's hands himself, that you may be sure he gets it."

Maurice could not do otherwise than comply with this request in the present situation of the person who advanced it, notwithstanding the promise he had made to Mr. Leuwitzer of returning to Richmond that after-

noon: he accordingly wrote to him a full account of the reasons which prevented him from keeping his word, and one of Sir Benjamin's servants was immediately commissioned to be the bearer of it.

CHAPTER IX.

The Miniature.

ABOUT the hour of three, as loud a rap as a muffled knocker would allow, announced a visitor, who proved to be Lady Dellaval: she was ushered into the drawing-room, to which Sir Benjamin had now returned, and where Amica had prevailed upon him to suffer her to make him some tea; for, late as the hour was, he had yet tasted no breakfast. Lady Buckhurst was lying upon the sofa, where she was endeavouring to repair to herself her want of sleep during the night: Maurice alone was absent, being employed in administering to the Colonel some light refreshments, which the surgeon had ordered him to take. Lady Dellaval said, that having heard of the Colonel's misfortune, she could not rest satisfied without making personal inquiries after his safety. Sir Benjamin repeated to her the

opinion of the surgeon, and this was followed by a history of as much as the knight himself was acquainted with of the duel, and its cause.

After half an hour had been devoted to the subject, Lady Dellaval gave a turn to the conversation, by lamenting the loss which Amica had sustained. "She hoped," she said, "that it would still be found; there had been ornaments lost besides her diamond sprig: she had then a miniature in her pocket, for which she had not yet been able to find an owner; and as she spoke she drew from her pocket an oval portrait set in gold, and guarded in front by a crystal. "It is a handsome picture—is it not?" she said, putting it into the hand of Amica, who found that it represented a young man of at most twenty-five.

When it had been handed round to all present, and each had said that they had never seen it before, consequently could not inform her Ladyship to whom it belonged. "I think," said Lady Dellaval, "I have seen somebody like it: don't you know any body it is like, Lady Buckhurst?"

"I think it is like a parson," returned her Ladyship; for it is dressed in black."

"Yes, it appears to be drawn for a clergyman, or a gentleman in mourning," replied Lady Dellaval; but I mean the countenance. Don't you know any body whose countenance resembles this, Sir Benjamin?"

"I never could find out a likeness in my life," replied Sir Benjamin, "till I was told who it was."

Lady Dellaval smiled, and turned to Amica for her opinion. Amica had for some moments been contemplating the portrait, and said, "If I did not suppose it impossible that it should be he, I could almost think it had been painted for Mr. Stanton."

"Have I ever seen him?" asked Lady Dellaval, earnestly.

"He sat next me last night at supper, in the dress of a hay-maker," replied Amica: "you invited him to drink a glass of wine with you."

"Is that gentleman's name Stanton?" said her Ladyship.

"Yes, it is," answered Amica.

"The moment one of my servants, who found it in the drawing-room, brought it to me, it struck me as resembling him very strongly," returned Lady Dellaval.

"People may fancy a picture like almost any body, when they don't know who it is done for," said Lady Buckhurst.

At this juncture Maurice came into the room: after he had replied to their inquiries about the Colonel, in whom no change had taken place, Lady Dellaval, bowing to him from her seat, said, "Mr. Stanton, will you do me the favour to tell me, whether in the number of your friends you are acquainted with any one who resembles this portrait?"

Maurice advanced to receive it at her hand; and as she put it into his, Amica remarked with surprise that she blushed deeper than her rouge, and she also believed that she saw her hand, which was extended with the portrait, tremble.

Maurice looked at it attentively for some time, and as he withdrew his eyes from it he turned them obliquely towards a mirror which hung over the chimney-piece.

"See there!" cried Lady Dellaval, who had been watching his features, "Mr. Stanton is of our opinion, Amica: he thinks it like himself, and looks into the glass to see whether it will confirm the resemblance."

Maurice was obliged to confess that he did find some similarity between the features delineated on the ivory and his own.

"In all probability then, Sir," replied Lady Dellaval, "it was painted for you, and you can inform me to whom I ought to restore it; it was dropped in my rooms last night."

"No, indeed, Madam," replied Maurice, "I never sat for my picture in my life."

"But you may have a brother who has," replied her Ladyship.

Maurice answered, "That he never had a brother."

"But you must have had a father, Sir," said her Ladyship smiling; "and you can't answer for what he may have done."

"Certainly not," returned Maurice: "I have no recollection of my father."

"The cold air makes my eyes water abominably," cried Lady Dellaval, applying to them her handkerchief.

A short pause taking place in the conversation, Lady Buckhurst inquired after Sir Jasper.

"I know nothing about him yet," replied Lady Dellaval: "after a dance he is never

called till six the next evening; but I dare say he feels the effect of his exertions with this young lady," pointing to Amica: "for I understood, as I came out, that he had ordered my warm bath to be heated for him.—Well," she added, after a short pause, "I must go; for I want to find out, if possible, to whom this picture belongs. Give my love to the Colonel, and tell him I hope he intends to get well very soon: I shall send to inquire after him again this evening." Arrived at the door of the apartment, she said, "Amica, my dear, do lend me a tippet; I foolishly came out without mine, and I don't find my pelisse sufficiently warm this morning."

"I'll bring you one of mine down immediately," replied Amica.

"No, no; let me step up with you to your chamber, and put it on there," returned her Ladyship.

Amica led the way, and as soon as they had entered the chamber, Lady Dellaval said, "Is not Mr. Stanton in the army?"

Amica replied in the affirmative.

"Who are his connexions," continued her Ladyship. "Do you know his relations?"

"He has not any alive," replied Amica: "a most fortunate chance introduced him to the knowledge of Mr. Leuwitzer, the same gentleman who was my kind protector during those years that I was separated from my mother; and who has proved himself equally a father to him as he has done to me."

"Is he going to leave you soon?" asked Lady Dellaval.

"I understand," said Amica, "that he has promised Sir Benjamin to remain with us a few days longer, till the Colonel is pronounced entirely free from danger."

"In the army is he?" returned her Ladyship, after a pause given to thought.

"Yes, in the army," repeated Amica; and added, "You are very particular in your inquiries."

"How do you know but I may have a mind to marry again," ejaculated Lady Dellaval; "and may have fixed upon this young man for my second husband?—To be sure you don't think me too old to become a wife?" These words were followed by a suppressed sigh; and throwing the tippet across her shoulders, she added, "This feels charmingly warm! I am now admirably

armed to brave the frosty air!" and wishing Amica good morning, she returned to her carriage.

Amica did not immediately quit her chamber, but continued there in reflexion on the inquisitiveness which Lady Dellaval had shewn to learn the particulars of Maurice Stanton's history. Tormented already herself by the attentions of Sir Jasper, she began to fear that Maurice was about to be circumstanced in an equally unpleasant manner with Lady Dellaval, as she believed her Ladyship to be a woman who would not hesitate to avow to any man that he had excited a passion in her breast: and surely Amica may be fully acquitted of indelicacy of sentiment, if even we confess that she heaved a sigh laden with the wish that there existed no obstacles to her bestowing her hand on Maurice, and by their union putting a period to the views and expectations of those whose desire it was to separate them.

CHAPTER X.

Very unfashionable Doctrine.

ON the following morning no change of consequence had taken place in the Colonel, his fever ran high, but the surgeon, still supported in his opinion by a knowledge of the strength of his patient's constitution, entertained the most sanguine hopes of his recovery.

About the hour of noon, whilst Maurice was giving his attention to the invalid, he was informed that Mr. Leuwitzer was below, and wished to see him;—in a few minutes he obeyed the summons; and on going down into the drawing-room found Mr. Leuwitzer there alone.

"My dear Maurice," exclaimed the good German on his entrance, advancing towards the door, and putting his hand upon it to ascertain that it was shut, as if he

wished their conversation to be private, —"What is this my dear Maurice I hear you have been doing?"

Maurice in surprise inquired to what action of his he alluded.

"Could I ever have believed that a son of mine," returned Mr. Leuwitzer, "for you know that I look upon you as my child; would so far have disregarded those instructions which I have given him for his good, and which it always gave me delight to believe that he received from me with thankfulness and profit, as to have become a party concerned in an action of wilful murder?"

"Can you mean the duel fought yesterday, Sir?" asked Maurice.

"What else can I mean?" ejaculated Mr. Leuwitzer, with more warmth than Maurice had ever yet on any occasion seen him display." Is not the intention of committing a crime, and the actual commission of it exactly the same to every reflecting mind; and in the eye of God?—what else then can I with justice name a meeting of this horrid nature, which men of the world so falsely call a point of honour?

"I was only a second in the affair, Sir," said Maurice.

"You were still a party concerned in a business at which the heart of every christian, every civilized man ought to revolt;—and by suffering yourself to appear as the friend of one who went out with the most criminal intention, did not you imply a tacit approbation of his conduct?"——did not your acceding to the invitation given you to become a second, bespeak that you would have no hesitation in becoming a principal, if the case were ever made your own?

"Whilst we live in the world, Sir," replied Maurice, "we are obliged to conform to its rules and opinions."

"What to its evil ones?" rejoined Mr. Leuwitzer," no! no! no!—no man is obliged, as you term it, to make a friend of the world, by forfeiting the friendship of his own heart;—I allow that many men of weak minds, and prejudiced opinions, act thus erroneously; but instead of following their baneful examples, we should regard them as seamen do land-marks, to guard

them from the rocks on which others have split."

"But he who acted otherwise, Sir," returned Maurice, "would expose himself to be branded with the stigma of coward."

"Tell those who name him so," exclaimed Mr. Leuwitzer, "that it is a coward who exposes himself to the fire of an adversary's pistol, because he has not the courage to live without the empty approbation of such as would fix upon him this epithet;—that it is the man of real fortitude, who dares to live satisfied with the applause of his own heart. —There is no argument in the blade and the bullet;—he who is in the wrong stands an equal chance of victory, as he who is in the right, when they are called upon as the umpires of a dispute:—believe also, that he who complies with the opinions of the world, as they are called, will not find a single individual of that world, ready to give him any consolation under the injury, which in compliance with its forms, he may have done to the private feelings of his heart;—he will only be laughed at, if he ventures to hint that his peace of mind has suffered from his accommodating himself to them—he must

endure the gnawings of conscience, without the balm of sympathy;—while he who is possessed of that true wisdom, which teaches him to renounce all compliance with such forms and opinions as are at variance with the laws of religion, will have a constant source of enviable reflection within his own breast, which will enable him to bid defiance to the sneers of the foolish and unprincipled."

"But," rejoined Maurice, "the dreadful sensation of being sunk into any condition, which those amongst whom we are fated to live, consider as shameful, is so torturing a reflection!"

"It is a luxury, compared to the reproaches of an uneasy conscience," answered Mr. Leuwitzer; "and from that inward and never-ceasing tormentor, no one can be exempt, who is forgetful of the first of christian duties—the forgiveness of injuries!"

"But you must allow, Sir," returned Maurice, "that it must be a mind of unusual strength, which can meet the contempt of the world with this indifference."

"It must be a mind of some education, I grant," said Mr. Leuwitzer; "one which is sufficiently enlightened to know the sin of

suffering the laws of man to trample atheistically upon the prohibitions of God."—"I say atheistically," continued Mr. Leuwitzer, "because I think I am not uncharitable in concluding that man an atheist, who in cool blood, either sends, or accepts, a challenge; for he undoubtedly cannot be a believer in God, who voluntarily transgresses one of his principal commandments in taking away the life which he cannot give; and he must either be a madman, or a fool, to set at defiance the vengeance of a God whose omnipotence he acknowledges."

"Is it not to be lamented," replied Maurice, "that the nature of accidents in this life is such as to place human beings in situations of this trying kind?"

"They are ordeals of our intrinsic merit," answered Mr. Leuwitzer, "and if we pass through them with true fortitude, they leave us purified for a happier existence in a future state."

Struck by the force of Mr. Leuwitzer's arguments, and mortified at having excited his displeasure, Maurice remained silent.

"Consider also the enormity of the case in which you have been engaged, above all

others which rank in the same class," continued Mr. Leuwitzer;" you have been the public abettor of a man, who had made the diabolical attempt of seducing a married woman from her conjugal fidelity."

"I can advance one argument in defence of my conduct, Sir," returned Maurice, "which has, I believe, escaped you."

"What is that?" asked Mr. Leuwitzer.

"I am in the army, Sir, a profession, which a single breath blown upon my honor, would oblige me to quit;" was Maurice's reply.

"Ah!" cried Mr. Leuwitzer sinking into thought, and beginning to traverse the apartment;—after a few moments he placed himself opposite to Maurice, and spoke thus: "I perceive your reasonings—an officer who should have had sufficient fortitude to act from his heart in a case of this kind, would, in addition to losing the good opinion of the world, be deprived of exercising the profession by which he lives:—to see you either dishonoured, or irreligious, would be to me a most painful circumstance;—in order therefore to obviate an evil of this nature, you shall, for my comfort, sell out of the army directly."

Maurice replied, that Mr. Leuwitzer had proved himself so kind a benefactor to him, and had upon every occasion manifested for him so tender an affection, amounting to the warmth of parental anxiety, that he should feel himself the most unprincipled, as well as the most ungrateful of men, were he not in every point to submit himself to his will.

Mr. Leuwitzer took the hand of his protegé in his, and pressing it with an energy which was communicated by the feelings of his heart, he said, "Whilst you continue worthy of my protection, I am more than repaid in bestowing it on you; but we must have no more duels; no more worldly intrusions upon the sacred duties of religion.—I shall publish it as *my* inclination that you quit the army—if you are questioned why you leave it, refer those who make the inquiry, to me for an answer;"—again he pressed his hand, and relinquished it with a smile of the most heartfelt satisfaction.

Not knowing how far Mr. Leuwitzer's ideas might extend with regard to the propriety of his giving his countenance and attention to a man in the situation of Colonel Buckhurst; Maurice requested to know

whether he had his permission to remain a few days longer in the house where he then was, or whether he wished him to return immediately to Richmond.

"No, no," replied Mr. Leuwitzer, "stay where you are;—what is done cannot be recalled;—it is now your duty only to consider his present sufferings; and if your presence can afford any relief to him, or to any of the family, I should do wrong to deprive them of it."

Their conversation being ended, Mr. Leuwitzer departed, saying that he was going into the city to visit his mercantile house.

The excellent bent of Maurice Stanton's heart was such, that from the first hour of his enjoying the friendship and protection of our benevolent German, he had felt that every act of gratitude which it was in his power to perform towards him, was his just due for the disinterested manner in which he had raised him to his favour and affection;—had even therefore the army been the mode of life which possessed the most powerful charms for his heart, he would without a murmur have relinquished it, from a sense of duty to his patron; but it was fortunately a life not in

every respect consonant to his feelings; the inward struggle, therefore, which he experienced in yielding implicit submission to the wishes of his more than father, was less than it would have been under a contrary impression; and the sensation of complying with the inclination of one so justly, and so ardently revered by him, inspired his heart with a sympathy of feeling, which communicated to him real pleasure in the reflection of his having had it in his power to display the willingness of his heart to be in every respect guided by him who had rescued it from desertion, and allied it by the tenderest bonds of affection to his own.

CHAPTER XI.

The Tender Passion.

THE report of the Colonel's disaster did not reach either Sidney Valmont, or Jarvis Block, till the day after the event had taken place; and just after Mr. Leuwitzer had left Sir Benjamin's house, they met together at the door of it.

Maurice had been requested by the Colonel's father to receive such of his son's friends as might call to make inquiry after him; and they were accordingly shewn into a parlour where Maurice immediately joined them.— The surgeon was just gone; some favourable symptoms he declared to have taken place since the morning; and this intelligence Stanton communicated to the visitors.

After some time their conversation wandered from the Colonel to other subjects, and Valmont said, "*Eh bien*, what think you of

mon amie Dellaval's fête, was it not kept up with a surprising deal of spirit and wit?"

"Yes, yes, there was plenty of that," cried Block, "I can answer for that, for I was in the middle of it—do you know which was me?" he added, tittering as he spoke.

"No," replied Valmont, "were you either the great Mogul, or his attendant the knave of clubs, that got so abominably hoaxed in the supper-room?"

"Oh Lord bless you, no," exclaimed Block, "I wish I had had a club to lay about me with, I promise you;—no, I'll tell you which was me; I don't mind letting it out before friends.—I got deucedly quizzed to be sure, but what did that signify, nobody knew me—I was the skeleton."

"What the gentleman in the coffin?" exclaimed Valmont.

"Yes, even so," returned Jarvis—"Aye, you may laugh, but as I hope to be saved, I thought I should never have come alive out of it—I shall hate the sight of a coffin as long as I live—I shall upon my soul!—you can't think what a fright I was in when I thought I was going to be smothered;—I fancy I should have been the first man that ever died in a

coffin, if I had been so unfortunate as to have slipped my breath in it."

"But what was the occasion of your being in danger of such a misfortune?" asked Maurice.

"Why you see, Sir, the cause was this," answered Block, "I ordered the man I hired the coffin of to make me a spring in the lid, that I might let myself out when I chose it—the spring went very well before I got in, and I was quite satisfied with it; but when I was shut up, the spring being at the end of the coffin that was over my head, instead of on one side of it; owing to the confinement I was in, I could not lift up my hand to give it the twitch requisite to make the lid fly open; and I verily believe if it had not been forced open by the lucky accident of my being upset; I verily believe, as I said before, I should have given my last puff in it; for the people all pressed round me in such a manner, that no air could get in at the little holes I had directed to be bored with a gimblet in the lid opposite to my face."

"Excuse me," cried Valmont, "I am positively very glad you are alive to divert us with the history of your escape, but I cannot

refrain from laughing at the idea of your ticklish situation!"

"But you have not heard all that happened to me that night yet," replied Block, "the best is to come; but indeed now, I hope you won't mention any thing about it; I care nothing what you say about *me*, but when a *lady* trusts to one's honour you know it is quite a different thing."

"A lady!" cried Maurice, "ho! ho! Mr. Block, pray proceed; a lady's secrets are always sacred."

"But won't you, Mr. Valmont, let out any thing about it?" asked Block.

"My dear Sir!" ejaculated the divine, "*Sacre Dieu!* betray a friend;—you can't conceive so ill of me, I hope."

"Well, I'll trust you," went on Mr. Block, "I'm resolved to tell you, just that you may see I have a lucky chance sometimes as well as my neighbours—why you must know that when I ran away from the sailor that called me Buonaparte, out of the grand illuminated drawing-room, which I dare say you both saw me do; or if you were not within sight of me, I make no doubt but you heard of it, in order to get away from the masqueraders

I slipt in at a door that I saw a-jar, and as soon as I was got in I shut it after me;—"Bless my soul, who is that?" said a voice, that made me look round to see where it came from; and there was a lady in a black silk domino, fastening up her hair before a glass—so I made her as polite a bow as I was able; though you may guess I did not appear to the best advantage in my skeleton's dress; and begged her pardon for intruding upon her, and just gave her a hint to explain to her how I had been circumstanced.—She smiled, and said, "Perhaps, Sir, you are not much accustomed to masquerades?"—I told her "she was very right, for I had never been at one before;"—"You'll like them better, Sir," she returned, "when you are a little more used to them."—I answered that I did not dislike them as it was, and that I should admire to see a little more of sport that night, only I was apprehensive that if I returned to the apartments where the masks were, in the same dress I had left them in, I should not have a moment's peace for quizzing:—"Oh! Sir," said she, "nothing is so common as for people to change their dresses in the course of the evening."—"I wish I knew how to

get a change," cried I.—' If you would like a domino,' she answered, ' I'll procure you one directly.'—" I should like it vastly, indeed, Ma'am," I returned, " but I should be very sorry to give you the trouble of getting it for me."—She begged I would not mention that, it gave her great pleasure to accommodate me; and when I had got it, she would walk back to the rooms with me herself;—so, she tied on her mask, and went out of the chamber saying, she would order me a domino, and be back in a minute or two.—Now, was not it very civil in her to a stranger?—I am sure she is a person of distinction by her politeness and easy manners; but then you know there is this to be said, she knew there could be none but gentlemen at a fashionable place like my Lady Dellaval's."

" Pray proceed," exclaimed Valmont, " I am most astonishingly interested in your adventure—are not you, Mr. Stanton?"

Maurice moved his head as an affirmative reply to Valmont's question, and Block proceeded thus:

" In about ten minutes, gentlemen, the lady came back, and with her came a servant who helped me on with a domino, and a hat,

and a black mask; and the lady then asking me if I would give her leave to take hold of my arm, we returned to join the company. —We had not walked about long, before she let suddenly go of me, and ran up to a gentleman dressed almost the same as I was in a domino, and so on;—she addressed him, and they continued in conversation together some minutes; but they whispered, and I did not hear a word they said, though I stood but a little way behind her;—when she came to me again, she said, 'I have been talking to a gentleman that knows you very well, and I am extremely happy to hear from him, that you are a man of honour; for even at private assemblies of this kind, people are often deceived in the characters with whom they form acquaintance.'—I said the gentleman was very civil to speak so handsomely of me, and begged to know who he was; but she refused to tell me—she called me several times by my name; and I told her that as she knew mine, it was but fair I should know hers, and that she ought to inform me what it was—'Oh, no, no,' she replied, 'don't ask me, that can't be.'—Recollect, said I, that I have seen your face, (for she was without her mask when I

first popped upon her in the chamber) and I'm determined I'll find you out by it;—for I really liked her so well, that I wished to be better acquainted with her, and so I told her.—'It can't be now,' she answered, 'I don't say that it shall never be, Sir, if you don't change your mind about my agreeableness,' or some word of that kind she made use of; and gave me to understand, though in a very delicate, elegant way, that she was as much pleased with me, as I was with her."

Here Mr. Block paused with a grin of self satisfaction pourtrayed on his countenance, which might have been translated into, "ain't I a lucky fellow?"

"*Bien fait, mon galant!*" cried Valmont, "come pray proceed to gratify our excited curiosity."

"Why," replied Jarvis, "the story is almost done for the present; what more I may have to tell you hereafter, I can't say."

"Well pray indulge us with what remains of it," said Maurice.

"Why," continued Mr. Block, "when the supper rooms were thrown open, and I was going to hand her into them, she said, 'that she was very sorry, but her time for re-

turning home was come.'— If you are determined to go, Madam, replied I, you must permit me the honour of seeing you safe to your own house, as you have no friend here to accompany you; — for she had told me before, she was there all alone :—' I am much obliged by your offer, Sir,' she answered, ' but I have the most particular reasons in the world for not accepting it.'—She led me near the door; when we got to it, she said, ' Did you never see the comedy of the Belle's Stratagem ?'—Now it so happened that I had seen Mrs. Jordan act in that play the night before, and so I told her ;—' Well then,' cried she, ' remember what she said to the gentleman at the masquerade, ' If you follow me one step, you never see me again; —and so say I to you,'—and as soon as she had spoken these words, away she ran, and I saw no more of her."

" *Pardi*, did you suffer her to escape you thus ?" demanded Valmont.

" Why I thought it was the best way to mind what she said, lest I should never see her again if I disobeyed her," replied Block; " but before she had been gone five minutes, I repented that I had parted from her; and I

went out into the hall to look for her; but I could not find her; I put half a guinea into the hand of one of the servants, and begged of him to find out for me what lady it was that had been in such a room, (and I described it to him,) fastening up her hair that evening;—and I gave as much to another, to get me information who the lady was, that went away just before supper, for, I thought, between the two, I must be right; but I ain't a bit the nearer the mark; for one came back and told me it was Lady Charlotte Townly, and the other that it was Lady Mary Misty; so, I don't know which to think it could be: do, Mr. Valmont, you know all the great people, describe the two ladies to me, and let me see if either of them be like the lady I mean."

Valmont described the first as very young, tall, elegant, and extremely retiring in her manners; the second as a woman of about fifty, cross-eyed, snappish, and proud.

The description of neither tallied with the portrait which Jarvis Block drew of his incognita; he reported her as rather low of stature, young, with a round, fat face, dark eyes, and *a most beautiful colour*.—" In short,"

he added, "I never was so charmed altogether with a woman in my life."

"And how do you contrive to exist in your present miserable state of suspense?" asked Valmont.

"Perhaps not so much suspense as you may think for," returned he; "I feel quite certain from what she said to me, that I shall see her again before it is long; besides I have been a good deal hurried about business this morning, and have not had much time to think of her."

This assertion provoked a laugh from Maurice in spite of his exertions to controul it.

"Aye, you may laugh," said Block, "but I am serious I promise you;—it is time for a man to settle at thirty-four; and I'll have none of your country daudles for wives;—I have been on the look out a long while; give me a woman of accomplishments, and a genteel way of talking, and walking, and dressing, and so forth;—give me just the woman I have sticking here in my heart at this present moment."

Maurice and Valmont both wished him success in obtaining the object of his passion; and Jarvis Block promised them that if they were within an hundred miles of him at his

wedding, they should drink part of a bowl of punch with him that day, nearly as big as the dome of Saint Paul's.—The clock now striking four, he jumped up, saying that he had but half an hour to get back into Bread-street, where he was going to dine; and wishing them good morning, and once more enjoining them to keep his secret, he departed.

When he was gone Maurice said, "Block is a good tempered fellow; I should be sorry if any thing seriously unpleasant happened to him, and I much fear from the account he has given us of his adventure at the masquerade, that he has fallen into the toils of some artful woman, probably of a disgraceful character."

"That is impossible," replied Valmont, "to my certain knowledge all the ladies tickets were issued by Lady Dellaval herself, of course disposed of only to women of honour;—I imagine that he has met with some woman of wit and spirit, who expected to derive entertainment from his ignorance and eccentricities; and who finding him a bore to drag about, freed herself from the incumbrance in the manner he has recounted to us—*bon jour!*"

CHAPTER XII.

A Secret.

CONTRARY to the expectations of the surgeon, Colonel Buckhurst's wound took an unfavourable turn, and he continued for some days in a critical situation.

At this time Mr. Leuwitzer called again in Hanover-square, and at the desire of Sir Benjamin staid dinner. As the cloth was removing from the table, a note was delivered to him by one of Sir Benjamin's servants: he asked whether an answer was required, and finding that the person who had brought it was gone, he was on the point of putting it into his pocket; but, at the earnest desire of Lady Buckhurst to wave the forms of *etiquette* with the party assembled, he was prevailed on to read it.

Whilst perusing it, a smile stole over his features, and an expression of surprise was apparent in his eye. Having reached the end, he refolded it; and without any com-

ments, kept it in his hand till the servants had left the apartment: when they had all quitted it, he said, "I am very much astonished by the contents of the note which you saw me receive just now, and equally so by the person who wrote it having addressed me at all: it comes from a lady whom I do not recollect to have seen above once in my life, and that was for about a quarter or half an hour, in this very house—Lady Dellaval."

"Lady Dellaval write to you, Sir!" exclaimed Amica.

"What can it be about?" cried Sir Benjamin. "What can the widow have to say to you? You are not a very likely man to attract the regards of a widow: excuse me; but I know you don't wish to be thought a man of that kind."

"I will read to you what she says," replied Mr. Leuwitzer.

"Lady Dellaval presents her compliments
"to Mr. Leuwitzer: she hopes he will par-
"don the liberty of which she is guilty in
"making the request contained in this paper;
"it is to entreat him to favour her with a call
"at any hour which best suits his own conve-

"nience this evening. She shall deny herself "to every one but himself. As she wishes to "discuss with him a point of the most material "consequence to her happiness, she trusts the "universally-acknowledged philanthropy of "his conduct will plead her excuse for this "familiar address."

At the conclusion of the note, Sir Benjamin renewed his laugh. Her Ladyship declared, "It was mighty comical! What could she want to say to him?" and Mr. Leuwitzer said, "That in compliance with the common forms of politeness he could not but accede to Lady Dellaval's request, and should call upon her about the hour of seven."

"Well then I hope you won't think of going out of town so late as it must be before you can set off after that," rejoined Lady Buckhurst, "but come back and take a bed here: Sir Benjamin will be vastly glad of your company to chat with him over his brandy and water after supper."

Mr. Leuwitzer accepted her invitation, and her Ladyship was delighted that he did so, as she would thus, she considered, have an early opportunity of hearing what had been the

cause of Lady Dellaval's note. Amica alone fancied she knew what was the important business of which she had spoken in it.—Mr. Leuwitzer was Maurice Stanton's only friend: in the opinion of Amica, Lady Dellaval had betrayed an evident partiality for him at the last morning call which she had made in Hanover-square, and she dreaded lest her Ladyship should be about to make Mr. Leuwitzer the confidant of her prepossession. She knew the heart of Maurice to be immoveably her's, yet she anxiously wished both him and herself to be spared any trials of the nature which her tormenting fancy conjured up to her imagination.

At a quarter before seven o'clock, Mr. Leuwitzer having requested one of Sir Benjamin's servants to procure him a coach, he proceeded in it to Lady Dellaval's.

The clock was on the point of striking eleven before he again made his appearance in Hanover-square; and scarcely had he entered the apartment where the family were sitting, ere he was assailed by the exclamations of, "Well, Sir!" and "Bless me, good Sir—I thought you had been lost!" from Sir Benjamin and his lady.

"I have been gone a good while," he replied; and looking at his watch, as he placed himself in a chair before the fire, "near four hours, I declare," he added.

"A deal of business may be done in four hours, Sir," said Sir Benjamin.

"Well, Sir; I hope you found Lady Dellaval well, and so on?" said Lady Buckhurst.

"Oh yes, very well!" returned Mr. Leuwitzer.

"You are as close as an iron chest about your visit!" exclaimed Sir Benjamin.

"The lady has requested me not to mention the occasion of her wish to see me," answered Mr. Leuwitzer; "and I always make a point of obeying the ladies' commands."

No other reply could be gained from him: it appeared that the lady had enjoined him silence and secrecy upon the subject of the conversation which had passed between them that evening, and that he had promised to obey her injunction.

On the following morning when breakfast was concluded, Mr. Leuwitzer telling Maurice that he wished for a little private conversation with him previously to his going into the city, they went down together into Sir Benjamin's study.

The Knight himself repaired to the chamber of his son; and Lady Buckhurst, observing their departure with a smile of satisfaction, scarcely waited for the closing of the door after her husband, ere she thus addressed her daughter—"Amica, my dear, I've got such a thing to tell you, you'll be *so* surprised, at least I can answer for myself, that I never was so much astonished in my life as when I heard it."

"To what does it relate, Madam?" asked Amica.

"Why, child," returned her Ladyship, "it relates to Lady Dellaval, and the note she sent to Mr. Leuwitzer, and his going to visit her yesterday morning: I heard it from my own maid Lenox; she told me this morning whilst I was getting up. You must know she went last night to see Mrs. Archer, Lady Dellaval's woman, and she asked her to walk up stairs with her into her mistress's chamber, and she would shew her the beautiful Egyptian dress that her lady had worn at her masquerade: so when they got into the chamber, they heard somebody talking in the dressing-room next to it. 'Who is that?' said Lenox.

'My lady is there with a gentleman who called upon her this evening,' returned Archer; 'and what can be his business with her I can't think, for he never was here before in his life. William says he is an elderly man, and talks in a foreign kind of an accent.'

"Well, she shewed Lenox the dress, and after she had looked at it, Mrs. Archer, Lenox says, crept towards the door of the dressing-room; saying as she went up to it, 'That she could not think what her lady could have brought the person, whoever he was, into her dressing-room for.'—So as Mrs. Archer kept standing by the door, Lenox walked towards her, and just as she was got up to her side, they both heard Lady Dellaval say, 'Noble, generous-hearted man! pity me, for such is the truth.' After that, Lenox says, they heard the gentleman, which was Mr. Leuwitzer, speaking; but they could not distinguish what he said, till he came to the last word of his sentence, and that was 'Child;' and Lady Dellaval directly took up the word, and cried out, 'Oh, that I had a father for my unfortunate child!'—"There!" exclaimed her Lady-

ship, interrupting herself in her narrative, "did you ever hear any thing like that?"

Amica could not do otherwise than confess that these sentences carried with them a very strange implication.

"Strange! echoed Lady Buckhurst.—"Why to me the whole matter is as plain as a pike-staff as the saying is.—Lady Dellaval has committed an indiscretion which is attended with a consequence of which she dreads the exposure, and having heard of Mr. Leuwitzer's generous disposition, she wants him to bring up the child as a foundling. I wish Lenox could have heard a little; but Mrs. Archer was afraid of being detected in listening, and so they were obliged to leave the chamber."

"I am surprised they durst commit so unjustifiable an action as to listen at all," said Amica.

"Aye, that is neither here nor there," returned Lady Buckhurst: "we are only talking of what *has* been heard, and not of *how* the hearing was come at. It is not my intention to publish the affair to the world I'm sure: I only tell it to you as a secret.—

Well, she has met with the friend she wanted in Mr. Leuwitzer; we have a pretty plain proof in his silence: though I can't say I think it so generous in her to have applied to him, as it may divide his affections in some measure with those he takes an interest in now, and lessen their expectations from him—I mean you and Mr. Stanton; but you in particular, because, as I said at the time, I look upon the diamond sprig he gave you as an earnest of what more he meant to do for you."

"For me, Madam," said Amica, "he has already done so much, that it would be a species of ingratitude for his past conduct to expect any farther kindness at his hands."

"Very true! very true!" rejoined Lady Buckhurst: "he has been very kind to you, that's certain; but people cannot carry their money away with them when they die.—However that has nothing to do with Lady Dellaval's mishap—and I'll tell you what is the only thing that puzzles me in this business, and that is her saying, 'Oh, that I had a father for my unfortunate child!' because that seems to imply, that he that should have been

the father is dead: if she had not said so, I should not have minded betting a pot of coffee I guessed the man."

Amica did not speak; and her Ladyship after a short pause, which she doubtless imagined her daughter had given to fruitless attempts at replying to this question, said, "Well, can't you guess?—Why then, what think you of the Colonel—Colonel Buckhurst?"

The conversation was for a short time interrupted by the entrance of a servant to remove the breakfast-table. When he was gone, Lady Buckhurst continued: "Why, was not the Colonel admitted to her dressing-room, and all the rooms in the house, at every hour of the day, as if he had been the master of it? Women don't suffer men to take such liberties till circumstances have given them the upper hand over them: no, no, child—depend upon that."

The appearance of the housekeeper, to consult with her lady on the family arrangements for the day, put a period to their conversation; and as her Ladyship left the apartment on her customary visits to the store-room and pantries, she enjoined Amica, "Not

to repeat to any one the secret which she had entrusted to her keeping."

Although Amica had not the remotest idea of suffering the subject to mount to her lips, she could not dismiss it from her mind: she reflected on the predilection which Lady Dellaval had betrayed to her for Maurice Stanton, and on the declaration which she had been overheard to make to Mr. Leuwitzer in her dressing-room; and from the combination of these circumstances, she was almost led to doubt whether her Ladyship had not possessed sufficient effrontery to solicit Mr. Leuwitzer to negociate a marriage for her with Maurice Stanton, in order that an alliance with him might veil her disgraceful situation.

Again she considered that the length of time Mr. Leuwitzer had remained with Lady Dellaval, and the complacent temper of mind in which he had returned from his visit to her, appeared to deny the possibility of such a proposition having been uttered by her; as an idea so repellent to his delicate and honourable feelings would have prompted him immediately and indignantly to have quitted her presence.

But then, on what account could he that morning have closeted himself with Maurice, and remained so long in private conversation with him? Did it not appear that this conversation was the result of some communication which had passed between him and Lady Dellaval on the preceding evening?

A servant entering the room shortly after, Amica inquired of him, whether Mr. Leuwitzer was still in his master's study? and the man replied, "That he had called him a coach about half an hour before, and that Mr. Stanton and he were gone together into the city."

Maurice had informed Amica, that in compliance with the wish of Mr. Leuwitzer he had sent in the resignation of his commission; and she now concluded that they had been in consultation upon the destiny of his future life.

CHAPTER XIII.

Unexpected Intelligence.

TWO or three days after this, about the hour of noon, Sir Benjamin entered the apartment where Amica was sitting, and with an expression of the utmost delight pourtrayed on his countenance, informed her that the surgeon who attended his son, and who was now in his chamber, had pronounced him entirely out of danger, and given it as his firm opinion, that his recovery would be speedy.

In a knowledge of the agony which the Colonel had for several days been suffering, those prejudices which various points of his conduct had previously to that time engendered against him in the mind of Amica, had been entirely forgotten; and considering him only as a suffering individual, she had earnestly desired his relief from the acute pain which he was enduring; and joined cordially

with his father in expressing pleasure at the surgeon's declaration.

Near the usual dinner hour at Sir Benjamin's, Maurice Stanton, who had been into the city to call upon Mr. Leuwitzer, returned into Hanover-square; Amica was the first of the family who met him, and she immediately communicated to him the favourable report of the surgeon.—He appeared to receive the intelligence much more coolly than she expected he would have done, and surprised at his manner, she inquired the cause.

"I am extremely glad," he replied, "to hear this good account of Colonel Buckhurst; but my thoughts are at this moment very much engrossed by another subject: Mr. Leuwitzer has by the foreign mail of to-day received news of a very melancholy nature from Hamburg."

"From Hamburg!" repeated Amica, the colour fading from her cheeks, "Oh tell me, is my dear friend, my second mother, Adelaide, I hope, I hope, she is well."

"Do not alarm yourself with fears for her safety," replied Maurice, "the letter which Mr. Leuwitzer has received is written by a friend, who informs him that on the morning

of the day on which he wrote it, Mr. Weimar had been most unexpectedly found dead in his bed; that the shock has been severely felt by his wife, and that she requests her brother will afford her the consolation of his presence."

"Poor Adelaide, and her fatherless babes! my heart bleeds for them!" exclaimed Amica, the tears bursting into her eyes as she spoke; for Mrs. Weimar was the mother of two female infants who were twins, and of a boy of at most three months old.

"Mr. Leuwitzer sets out for Hamburg to-morrow," rejoined Maurice, "he is now at his house in the city putting his affairs into a train preparatory to his departure; he is very much affected indeed by the intelligence which has reached him; and I am on his account, as well as on the Colonel's own, glad to find that the surgeon judges to-day so very favourably of his case; as Mr. Leuwitzer wishes very much that I should accompany him to Hamburg, feeling a reluctance to undertake the journey alone in the present depressed state of his mind; but he has not yet resolved that I shall become his companion; he waits to form his determination till he

comes hither, which he will do late in the evening; intending if he does not find the Colonel amended, and perceives that my remaining in England can be a source of the least satisfaction to this family, to forego the comfort, which, he says, he shall otherwise derive from my society."

"Excellent! generous man!" ejaculated Amica, "ever displaying the nobleness of his mind by the sacrifices which he makes of his own inclinations, to gratify the feelings of others!"

Rendered unfit for society by the dejection of spirits into which she was thrown by her sympathy in the unhappy fate of her friend Adelaide, Amica retired immediately after dinner to her own chamber, where she remained alone till between the hours of eight and nine, when a gentle knock at the door announced a claimant for admission; she opened it, and perceived Mr. Leuwitzer, who taking a chair by her fire, said, "Maurice has doubtless informed you of the melancholy event with which I am this day become acquainted?"

Amica's tears furnished him with a reply in the affirmative.

"It is a great relief to my mind," continued Mr. Leuwitzer, "to learn that the state of the Colonel's health is such, that I may make Maurice my travelling companion, without being guilty of an unkindness to this family; against whom I would not, particularly on your account, from any consideration, perform one."

"I have, my dear Sir," said Amica, "another travelling companion to propose to you, whom I hope you will not refuse to admit into your party."

"Who is that?" Mr. Leuwitzer inquired.

"Myself," she replied, "do suffer me to go with you, I am certain I can make myself of infinite service to Mrs. Weimar; I shall be able to superintend the nursing of her infants, and relieve her from the anxiety of committing them to the care of strangers whilst sorrow renders her inadequate to the task herself. —Give me your permission," she added after a short pause, as Mr. Leuwitzer did not speak, "pray, allow me this indulgence; do not deny me the gratification of returning to you some portion of the kind services I have received at your hands!"

Mr. Leuwitzer gave a sharp hem! by

which he checked the rising current of his softened feelings, and replied, "Dear, grateful girl!" a forced smile stole over his countenance, and he continued, "you make me vain by thus rendering me a true prophet in those augurations of the excellence of your disposition which I drew whilst you were yet only a child; and by the credit which you do both by your words and actions to the virtuous principles which I instilled into your mind —your offer delights me, but, I cannot accept it;—it would not be right in me to take you from the protection of your mother on such a business; nor is this a time of the year for a female, or indeed any person, except from absolute necessity, to cross the sea; which is with me a much stronger reason than any other, for repeating that you must entirely give up the idea."

Amica remonstrated; "she should," she said, "share his lot, the fate in which of all others it would give her the greatest happiness, at all times, to participate."

Mr. Leuwitzer continued firm in opposing her plan, and Amica was reluctantly compelled to relinquish it:—"How long do you imagine you shall be gone?" she asked.—He

replied, "that it was his intention to remain in Germany no longer than he should find it absolutely necessary for him to do so, in order to place the trust of his mercantile concerns upon the continent in the hands of some confidential person; and then return to England with his sister and her children."—He proceeded to say, that he should set out on the following morning for the port from whence he was to sail; but added, that he feared he should not be able to leave London before noon, as he should call upon Lady Dellaval previously to his departure; and he supposed it would be impossible to see her before half past ten or eleven o'clock.

"Must you see her before you leave London, Sir?" asked Amica.

Mr. Leuwitzer replied simply, "yes;" and earnestly as Amica wished to pursue the subject, she was obliged to forbear renewing it, being well acquainted with the objection which Mr. Leuwitzer at all times entertained to being questioned upon his actions. "Whatever concerns others, or can give them any happiness to be informed of," it was his constant saying, "I always tell them without being asked to do so; and, therefore, I con-

sider it wrong in those who know my habit, ever to question me at all."—From a man of a harsh disposition, such a maxim would have appeared the result of pride, and closeness of temper;—in a mind of Mr. Leuwitzer's universal benevolence, it was to be imputed to a widely different impression.

"There is one little affair," Mr. Leuwitzer rejoined, "which I wish you to transact for me as soon as you can with convenience to yourself after my departure; and which I am prevented from executing in person by my sudden journey."

Amica begged him to explain.

"Take down in the first place in your pocket-book," he answered, "the name of a street which I shall mention to you, and the number of a house in that street."—This being done, he continued to say, "in that house lives the poor French woman, whose husband challenged, and wounded Colonel Buckhurst; it was a wicked action in him to send a challenge; but if any thing can excuse a fault of that kind, it surely must be when it is committed in the defence of the virtue of a beloved wife;—for her sake therefore, putting him out of the question, it would be wrong

in me who have a superfluity, to suffer them to want; and I fear by what I have learnt from Maurice of their situation, that they are in great distress indeed;—so take this twenty pound note; make an excuse for calling at the house to buy a flower, or a feather, or any thing you please, and give it to her without saying who you are, or whether it is your own present, or that of any body else.—But mind you give it to the wife."

Amica promised to obey.

"You have not heard of your diamond sprig yet?" asked Mr. Leuwitzer.

"I am ashamed to answer you on that subject, Sir," replied Amica; "to have lost it appears such a proof of unpardonable carelessness, in regard to a trinket which I so much valued, because it was your gift to me;—I must never accept a present from you again."

"That will be at your own option in a day or two," he replied, "for as I conceived the fault was not your own, I have bespoken you another ornament exactly like the first."

Amica clasped his hand in hers, and pressed upon it her lips.

Scarcely able a second time to repress the starting tear, Mr. Leuwitzer said, "I shall

not probably have an opportunity to-morrow morning of bidding you farewell, except in the presence of many other persons, and I cannot be satisfied at quitting the kingdom, however short the space of time for which I am about to leave it, to part from you in a less affectionate manner than my heart feels for you; which ever has been, and ever will be as a father."

Amica could not speak, nor could she weep; she fell upon his neck, and transferred her kisses from his hand to his cheeks:—"God bless you, my dear child," he cried, returning her embrace with the most ardent pressure of affection, "God bless you, and may he grant that I find you as well, and as happy at my return, as I now leave you:—take care of your health," he added, "in this place of dissipation;—on your morals, I need give you no caution, they are I am sure steady;—and your heart, Amica, I believe is secure too; is it not?"

The expression of Amica's countenance confirmed him in the opinion he had for some time entertained of the mutual attachment which subsisted between herself and Maurice; and he explained to her his suspicions by say-

ing, "I hope you are not angry with me for making Maurice my companion, and depriving you of his society?—it will be but for a short time."

"Can either he or I be happier," answered Amica, "than in holding ourselves at the disposal of your will?"

"You are an excellent girl; and he is a happy man to have perceived the excellence of your heart, and to have a preference in it in his own favour," returned Mr. Leuwitzer.

"I did not admit him to my heart upon my own opinion alone," answered Amica, "in that I might have been deceived;—you adopted him as your son, and I regarded his merits with your eyes, in which mode of estimation I was certain I could not be mistaken."

Again Mr. Leuwitzer pressed her to his heart; "farewell," he said, "once more I pray God to bless you," and he then quitted the apartment, in order to give her an opportunity of composing her feelings before she appeared at the supper table.

CHAPTER XIV.

More unwelcome News.

ON the following morning, by her own appointment, Mr. Leuwitzer breakfasted with Lady Dellaval; a circumstance which provoked much astonishment and many observations, which they themselves considered as sallies of wit, from the lips of Lady Buckhurst and the Knight her husband.

At a little after eleven o'clock, Mr. Leuwitzer was ready to depart: Maurice Stanton, like himself, had taken a private leave of Amica; accordingly when the chaise, which was to transport them the first stage of their journey, was announced, very few minutes elapsed before they stepped into it, and were borne away from the sight of Amica, who watched the carriage from a window till its revolving wheels disappeared from her view.

She then felt as it were for a time deserted, and sensations of a most unpleasant nature

began to steal over her mind, but considering that it became her to struggle against them, she resolved to do so; and the morning being an uncommonly fine one, she requested her mother to suffer one of the footmen to attend her abroad for an hour's walk, alledging that she had some small purchases which she wished to make.

Lady Buckhurst complied; and John having been warned by his mistress to keep as close as possible to Amica's heels, and not to suffer her to turn into any crowded streets away from the genteel parts of the town, she set out on her walk.

Amica's secondary enjoyment to that of being in Mr. Leuwitzer's society was the executing of his commands; accordingly as soon as she had turned out of the square, she informed the servant that there was a shop for artificial flowers which she had a great desire to go to rather out of the route to which her mother had requested her to adhere, and begged him to shew her the way to the street which she named to him, and which was that where Madame Le Blanc resided.

John readily complied, and Amica proceeded according to his directions till she

arrived at the house. On inquiring for Madame Le Blanc, she was immediately shewn up to an apartment where she was met by a female, whom she instantly recollected to be the same whom she had seen so indignantly repulsed by the coarse and vulgar Mrs. Flap: the *emigrée,* it appeared, recollected her also, and expressed herself much obliged at her having condescended to leave so grand a shop as Mrs. Flap's, to come and view her articles in so obscure a situation.

Amica made choice of a feather which she intended to employ John to carry home as an apology for her visit; and having selected it, she put the twenty-pound note into the hand of Madame Le Blanc, and begged her acceptance of it. With many thanks of the warmest nature, the French-woman received the present, and said, "*Ah mon Dieu!* how dreadful it is to be thus reduced to accept alms! How little did I ever imagine this would be my case or my husband's! But we have nothing to reproach ourselves with: it was in a national cause that we fell from our prosperity, and we would willingly do so again and again, if such a thing were possible,

rather than forfeit our attachment to our beloved and lamented monarch."

"What was your husband's rank in France?" asked Amica.

"He was a Marquis," she replied; "the Marquis of Saint-Hilaire: but we changed our names with our situation. He considered that it appeared foolish and vain to see me working for our livelihood by the name of *La Marquise,* so we call ourselves Le Blanc now. Oh, what we have suffered! We have found the English very compassionate and very generous, but the reverse of situation is dreadful notwithstanding. Besides we have lately had calamities of a domestic nature to add to our infelicity: my husband's mother, who is herself the daughter of a man once of the first consequence and wealth, has been at the point of death: you may readily imagine how impossible it was for us to procure for her the comforts to which she had been accustomed, and how much we suffered from seeing her bereft of them; but God has looked with a pitying eye upon her, and she is much better. And even still worse than that has happened to us," she added; and related

in delicate terms the visits of Colonel Buckhurst and their consequence, saying, "That ignorant of the fate of the gentleman whom he had wounded, her husband had till that day been obliged to separate himself from her, and keep in close retirement; but that the public prints of that morning having announced the Colonel to be out of danger, he had again returned to his own home; and I hope now," she continued, "by my industry to ensure us a comfortable existence, that is as comfortable a one as exiles in poverty and in the midst of strangers can expect to have."

Amica sighed. Madame Le Blanc added, "Heaven send you may never know what it is to be driven from your country, and cast upon the world bereft of all you once possessed."

"I hope those who have driven you from them will live to repent the infelicity they have brought upon their mother-country and her children," replied Amica.

"There has been blood enough shed already," returned Madame Le Blanc: "pray the Virgin the sword of the wicked may soon be sheathed again!"

Although strongly interested in the fate of this pitiable woman, and desirous of passing some more time in her society, at the expiration of half an hour, Amica was compelled to depart.

In her way back to Hanover-square, a crowd in the street attracted her observation. She perceived that it was occasioned by a waggon heavily laden, of which the wheels, by the carelessness of the driver had come in contact with those of an elegant chariot, by which accident the latter had been overturned.

The chariot lay on one side; from the door which was uppermost, at the moment of her eyes falling upon it, she perceived a lady emerging, who was dressed in a lace turban and an extremely rich pelisse of green velvet, and whom she immediately recognised to be Mrs. Flap.

Desirous of moving away from the crowd as fast as she was able, she did not even cast a second look at Mrs. Flap; but when she had passed on to a considerable distance from the overturned carriage, considering that she might have been mistaken in the countenance, but that if she had not, it appeared a most

extraordinary circumstance how Mrs. Flap should have introduced herself into a carriage of so elegant an appearance, and in so costly a dress; and wishing to know whether her ideas were just or not, she inquired of John if he knew the lady whom they had seen getting out of the overturned chariot?

"Oh yes, Ma'am!" replied John: "it was Mrs. Flap, the milliner in Old Bond-street."

Amica could not forbear smiling at the confirmation of her suspicions, and John continued, "Pray, Ma'am, did you see the gentleman who got out before her, and then helped her out?"

"No, I did not see any gentleman," returned Amica.

"Because it was Mr. Block, Ma'am," answered John.

Amica recollected the kisses which she had once overheard given in Mrs. Flap's shew-room, just before she had entered it, and found no one there but the milliner herself, and a man, whom she had believed to be Colonel Buckhurst, leaving it by an opposite door; and fearing, from the smile on John's features that he might give her some confirmation of her suspicions on that morning if she

replied to his information concerning Mr. Block, she did not speak again.

Lady Buckhurst and her daughter dined alone; and when the cloth was removed, Amica informed her mother of the situation in which she had that morning seen Mrs. Flap.

"With Jarvis Block was she?" said Lady Buckhurst. "Ah! I don't wonder at any thing I hear of that woman, after what I have been told of her: I never intend to go near her shop again, and I meant to have warned you against it this morning before you went out, only it slipped my memory; she is a very bad kind of a woman indeed, and her house is a place where there are very strange doings."

"Indeed, Madam!" said Amica: "how did you learn this?"

"Why," returned her Ladyship, "the first hint of the kind I had was from the Colonel; but I did not mind him, because he says any thing of any body: but a little while after that, one night when I was at the play without you, I saw Mrs. Flap dressed out, and sitting in one of the front-boxes; and first one gentleman came to speak to her, and then

another. So I said to old Lady Cackle, who sat next me, that I was amazed at what I saw of Mrs. Flap. 'Why, to be sure, you don't know the creature!' said Lady Cackle. "I have dealt two or three times at her shop," I answered. 'Well, I am astonished to hear it,' returned she, 'why the woman is one of the *abominables.*' Yes, abominables; that was the word she made use of. 'Nobody,' she continued, 'goes near her shop but such *demireps,*'—what a word was that again!—'as Lady Dellaval and Lady Freelove, and some of those that have no characters to lose.'"

"You surprise me, Madam!" said Amica. "Why, according to this account, there may be danger in going to a common shop in this place."

"To what appears such, child, there may indeed," returned her Ladyship. "I remember that the footman who lived with us when we first came to London told me, when I inquired for a fashionable milliner, that his last mistress, Lady Freelove, had been most *intimate* with Mrs. Flap: I know I thought it a very odd word, when he used it, to express the kind of acquaintance which I supposed

could only subsist between a lady and her milliner; and it struck me, after what Lady Cackle told me of Lady Freelove, what was meant by it; and I had no doubt but the saucy fellow knew it, and had a mind to play me a trick; for I had given him warning to quit me that very morning, because he was above what I called his work. Well, he was gone when this information came to my ears, and it was impossible to question him then; so I asked Lenox if she knew any thing of the matter, and she promised to make inquiry for me of one of the grooms. She says the London grooms are as wise as their masters; for horses are the gentlemen's first favourites, and therefore grooms have every where the upper hand.

"Well," continued her Ladyship, "the next day Lenox told me all about it; that ladies went to Mrs. Flap's to pretend to buy caps, but in reality to meet the gentlemen; and that she has a wicked old mother who lives with her, one of the worst of the bad; and an Irish woman too! And when Lenox had done telling me, she said, 'And now, my Lady, if you won't be angry, I'll tell you who the groom says is a customer there from this very

house.'—'Ah!' returned I, 'you mean the Colonel, no doubt?'—and should not you have thought so, my dear?"

"I should have suspected it indeed, Ma'am," replied Amica; and not doubting but he had been the person whom Lenox had named, she repeated to Lady Buckhurst what she had herself been a witness of on the morning she had gone alone to Mrs. Flap's.

"I don't doubt it," returned Lady Buckhurst: "I dare say he is acquainted in every house of the kind in town. No, it was not he Lenox meant:—no, my dear; not he.—Only think of it! she told me, they said Sir Benjamin bought his gloves there."

"I hope you don't give credit to such reports," said Amica.

"Why I pretended to Lenox that I did not," answered her Ladyship: "but when we were in bed, I questioned Sir Benjamin about it, and told him if I could prove such a thing I would not live with him another minute, and desired him to tell me the truth; but he persisted in it that it was a falsity, and behaved very kind to me indeed, and bought me a gold watch the next day; so I don't know what to think."

Amica was not at all at a loss in that particular; but she experienced satisfaction in learning that so easy a reconciliation had taken place between them: as she loved her mother sufficiently well to wish to see her happy, and felt conscious that a wife never adds to her felicity by prying into the frailties of her husband.

After a considerable pause in the conversation, Lady Buckhurst taking up a glass of wine, which had been standing before her for some time, said, "Come, let us drink Sir Benjamin success: I am sure I wish it him with all my heart."

"Success, Madam?" echoed Amica: "in what particular?"

"Why to be sure, child, you know what an important day this is?" replied her Ladyship.

"Really I do not," returned Amica.

"Why then it must be," said Lady Buckhurst, "that what with the bustle there has been about the Colonel, and Mr. Leuwitzer going into foreign parts, and one thing or another, that you have not heard it; for I think if you had heard it, you could not have forgot a matter of such consequence. Why

it is to be decided in the parliament-house this evening, whether Sir Benjamin is to keep his seat now, without any farther trouble, or whether there is to be a new election about it; and he is gone to dine at a friend's, where the result of the business is to be brought to him. What a thing it will be, if he should have all the fatigue and expence of another canvass to go through with!"

To her own happiness Amica did not feel the result of the least importance whatever; but knowing that her mother would consider a confession of the indifference which she really felt as a mark of the greatest undutifulness, she expressed herself in terms calculated to give her pleasure.

Between the hours of ten and eleven, a loud knock at the door, succeeded by a step on the stairs of which her Ladyship knew the sound, made her start from her seat, and hasten to open the door of the apartment, in order to learn as quickly as possible the information for which she was impatient.

Had she observed the clouded brow of Sir Benjamin as he entered the room, it would have been unnecessary for her to have uttered

her inquiry; but speaking before she saw it, she ejaculated the simple, but expressive sentence of "Well, my dear?"

"Oh damnation!" cried the Knight, grinding each syllable between his teeth as he uttered it; and moving up to the fire, threw himself into an arm-chair by its side.

Her Ladyship petrified as it were by the intelligence, and rendered apparently incapable of commenting upon the sad truth, placed herself in her accustomary corner, directly opposite to that occupied by her husband.

Sir Benjamin sat beating the devil's tatoo; her Ladyship sat twirling her thumbs with an activity which was communicated to them by the agitation of her mind, and Amica wished herself any where but where she was.

CHAPTER XV.

More Mistakes than One.

It is by no means an uncommon case for the bed of sickness to bring a man to reflection, and cause him to behold life in a very different point of view to what he has before been accustomed to see it in.—He begins to perceive that the path of unrestrained pleasure is hung at the entrance with roses, but that the passenger having proceeded a short distance along its devious way, thorns alone accompany the rest of his progress; and all the visions of transporting joys with which he set out, are wrecked upon the rocks of disappointment—on this conviction he begins to sigh for a state where happiness does not exhaust itself in gusts of excess, but husbanded by moderation, becomes certain and durable.

In this state of mind did Colonel Buckhurst find himself when the excess of pain

which he had at first endured from his wound, began to subside, and his reasoning faculties to regain their powers of operation:—the Colonel's mind we are already acquainted, was not possessed of strong natural powers, nor particularly enlightened by the effects of education; the arguments, therefore, which passed within his breast, were not of a very refined nature.—He reflected on the many disappointments which had attended his plans for procuring himself pleasure, even with a full purse at his command—he considered with horror, how very narrowly he had escaped death itself in his last attempt:—he was not, we are afraid, stung with any thing like remorse at the idea of his having tottered upon the margin of the grave, with a conscience unburthened of its misdeeds; the only sensation which accompanied this knowledge was, a thankfulness that he had been preserved for further enjoyment in this world; and a determination not hastily to hazard the privation of it again.

"How should he act?" he asked of himself, "what plan should he pursue to enjoy happiness in this life, and still not expose himself to the vexation and mortifications

which had attended the years he had already lived in it?"—With the idea of either pleasure, or happiness even before this period, Amica had never failed to enter his imagination, and her image now recurred to it with double force;—"What bliss could equal the possession of a woman like her?—Then, why not marry her, and make her his for ever?—To be sure, marriage was a sad clog; the very idea of its being for life, made it appear awful;—but then who could ever be weary of being united to a woman like Amica? —Constant happiness must attend the man who was her husband!" concluded the Colonel; and he resolved to propose himself to her.

These reflections and resolutions passed in the mind of the Colonel, during the same night that his father lay fretting and tossing upon his uneasy bed, at the woful fiat of his having been pronounced an ex-senator.

The determination of a libertine to reform, is usually extremely hasty; and for this reason, the reformation of a man who has once been a decided libertine, is generally of very short duration; he has not courage to give the subject sufficient reflection to fix his mind

to that plan of correction with which his actions, for a short time, comply: he either persuades himself that he reforms, because the inability brought upon him by past sins, renders him inadequate to further trespasses at the moment of his resolution; or because a shew of amendment is to procure him some gratification which he cannot obtain without it.—When the repentance of a libertine is real, it is slow in its progress: we shall, therefore, not be very uncharitable in concluding that the Colonel would not have dreamt of a reform, had not the visions of his solitary chamber presented Amica to him as the reward.

Colonel Buckhurst had perceived that there existed a strong attachment between Amica and Maurice Stanton; but he could not determine, whether it proceeded from a brotherly affection natural to the circumstances of the patronage which they had alike enjoyed from Mr. Leuwitzer, or from a tenderer motive.—However about this he was indifferent; it appeared to him very improbable that Amica should have any hesitation in deciding between himself and Stanton, who was a man of no fortune, nor of any expectations, except

those which he might place upon the death of Mr. Leuwitzer, who was himself very likely yet to live twenty or thirty years.—He considered also, that if the reverse should chance to be the case; even placing himself out of the question, Lady Buckhurst would never be induced to give her consent to her daughter's espousing a man her inferior in point of situation; whilst he was equally certain of her Ladyship's influence being exerted in his favour; as he knew her to act regularly according to the injunctions of Sir Benjamin; and was well acquainted that Sir Benjamin would in this particular, as he had done in all others, use his utmost endeavours for the accomplishment of his wishes.

Accordingly on the follow morning when our knight appeared at the bed side of his son to inform him of the sad event which had taken place on the foregoing evening, he was not a little surprised to perceive the intelligence received by him with much coolness, and to hear the Colonel remark, "that all pleasure was vested in domestic enjoyments; that he was come to a conviction of this truth, and intended to marry."

"What do you say?" cried Sir Benjamin, with the same infidelity to the correctness of his powers of hearing, as any of Westley's congregation would have displayed, had they heard their shepherd break forth into one of the prophane soliloquies of Macbeth, or Hamlet; "What do you say, Charles?"

The Colonel repeated the astonishing sentence; and his father supposing that his fever had increased, and that he was under the influence of a temporary delirium, felt entirely at a loss how to answer him, or what to do; —happily the surgeon entered the room to his relief; but the surgeon's declaration that his patient's fever was infinitely abated, increased his astonishment ten fold.

The surgeon being gone;—"Are you really serious in what you said to me just now?" asked Sir Benjamin.

The Colonel replied in the affirmative, and added, that he had resolved to marry Lady Buckhurst's daughter; he said *marry*, for they are only men, who from the possession of sensitive minds, collect a degree of diffidence relative to their pretensions to any woman's hand, who allow it to be a doubt, whether the inclinations of their mistress will meet their's.

In his determination to marry, the Colonel could not have selected any woman, who would so warmly have met the approbation of his father, as her upon whom his choice had fallen; and for this reason; on the sixteenth day of the following month, Amica would complete her twenty-first year, a period at which Sir Benjamin would be called upon to pay her twenty thousand pounds out of the fortune which he had received in marriage with her mother; and this was a consideration which had more than once given Sir Benjamin the head-ache.—Men of the greatest property are frequently the men who have the least ready money at command, and this was the case with him; what he had was principally embarked in his Spanish and Portugal trade; or locked up in the funds, from whence it could not be sold without his suffering a considerable loss;—whilst Amica remained single, he had considered that it might be very possible, and perhaps easy, to reconcile her to some delay in the payment; but should she marry, a husband would demand immediate possession of her fortune: all these anxieties were removed from his mind, by the declaration which the Colonel had just made of his intention to solicit her hand:—the

Colonel was a partner in his father's house; and the fortune of his intended wife was embarked in the concerns of that house; no possible arrangement could be happier.—He communicated his feelings to his son; and his son in return, requested him to lay the affair before Lady Buckhurst, and desire her to make the declaration of his passion to her daughter.

Her Ladyship heard the business upon which Sir Benjamin entered her dressing room with both surprise and pleasure.

"Don't you think she'll jump at the offer?" cried the knight.

"Why as to that," returned her Ladyship, "I'd have you to know, that none of the Dimicks were ever yet forced to go a begging for a husband.—Amy is a very fine girl, and in a very short time will have a handsome fortune in her own hands; and I can't see the reason why she, above any of my family, should have cause to *jump* at a husband."

"Pho, nonsense," replied the knight, "I did not mean any disrespect to her; I only meant ——."

"Aye, aye, I know what you meant very well," answered his rib, "you meant that

women are glad of a husband whenever they can catch one; I know what you meant; but I maintain that it is no such a thing, and that they are shamefully scandalized; however, I don't want to quarrel with you, I'm sure."

"Nor I with you, I declare; I only ——."

"Well then, hold your tongue, and listen to me, and I'll tell you something that I dare say you'll like to hear.—It is my opinion that Amica's fancy stands for the Colonel."

"You don't say so?" ejaculated the knight.

"Yes I do, and I believe it," returned her Ladyship; "I never believed she had no *predirection* for nobody till some days ago; and then I thought to myself I had found it out."

"Aye,—how was that?—when was that?" asked Sir Benjamin, impatiently.

"Why the morning the Colonel was brought home wounded from the duel," replied Lady Buckhurst, "while you were in bed and asleep, and dreaming nothing of the matter; she happened to peep over the bannisters to see what the noise was, and when she caught a glimpse of him bringing up the stairs, half dead as it were, or quite dead, per-

haps she might think him, she plumped down in a fainting fit, almost in a minute."

"Very well, very well, indeed!" cried Sir Benjamin, "I like that; I'm glad of that:—well, go you, and open the Colonel's mind to her, and when you have had a little talk with her upon the affair, come to me in my study, and let me hear what she says."

Big with the importance of her commission, Lady Buckhurst went to the dressing-room of her daughter;—and Sir Benjamin retired to his study.

Nearly two hours had elapsed before her Ladyship appeared in the apartment where her husband sat awaiting her coming; she entered it with eyes expressive of discontent, and her cheeks flushed with a crimson hue, which was produced by the heat of the argument in which she had been engaged.

"Well!" exclaimed Sir Benjamin.

"Oh dear!" cried her Ladyship, flinging herself into a chair, "let me sit down, for I am in such a fluster I don't know what to do with myself;—I have been deceived in Amica;—I never could have believed such a thing, if I had not heard it from her own lips."

"What, has she returned a flat refusal to the Colonel's proposal, then?" demanded the knight.

"Oh, as to that," returned Lady Buckhurst—

"As to that!" ejaculated Sir Benjamin, taking up her words, "why do *you* consider that, as such a little matter then?"

"Oh, but there is worse than that, ten times over worse than that," answered her Ladyship.

"I can't see how that's possible," grumbled out the knight.

"But I'd explain it to you, if you'd have patience to listen," returned her Ladyship.—"In the first place, I made known the Colonel's inclinations to her; and she answered and said, something about every woman being under a kind of an obligation to a man that made her an offer of his hand, and that she considered herself so to him; but that she could never like him for a husband.—Now, said I, how can you pretend you are indifferent to him, when the morning he was wounded in the duel, you fainted at the sight of him; and the first word you asked when

you came to yourself, was, whether he was dead or not?"

"Aye, what did she say to that?" cried Sir Benjamin.

"Say!" echoed her Ladyship, "I'll tell you the exact words if I can—'Madam,' said she, 'it was not on the Colonel's account that I was thus agitated; on first looking down the stair-case, I perceived the blood on Maurice Stanton's waistcoat, and believed it to be him who was wounded."

"Maurice Stanton!" cried the knight,

"Aye, so I called out; Maurice Stanton!" says I! for I was perfectly *putrified* at the sound.—"Then you are not so indifferent to him as you are to the Colonel?"—'You have ever allowed me to regard Mr. Leuwitzer, as my father,' she replied, 'Maurice looks up to him in the same light, and thence I have been accustomed to consider him as my brother.'—"Fiddle faddle," cried I, "if you talk of brotherly considerations, pray ain't the Colonel more of a real brother to you; is not he the son of your mother's husband?—but I can see it all Miss, you are in love with Stanton, and you may as well own

it, for I am certain of it;"—so she made answer, 'if you had ever questioned me on the subject, Madam, I should without hesitation have confessed to you, that my affections were placed on him; I have used no artifice to conceal that such were my sentiments.'—"Well," cried I, for I could not keep my temper to hear her out, "then I tell you without artifice, that you never shall marry him, and so you had best turn your thoughts to somebody else."—'That,' she replied, 'was impossible; she would promise me never to become his wife without my consent, and she hoped I never would compel her to marry any body else.'

"What did you say then?" asked Sir Benjamin.

"Why, I was rather moved at that," replied her Ladyship, "because it shewed that she felt some duty for me after all; so I tried to reason with her; says I, now what a simpleton you must be, ever to think of throwing yourself away on a man that is not worth a sixpence in the world, when you are the daughter of a woman with a title like me; and that will have the handsome property you will have at your own disposal:—Why,

in a month more, says I, you can claim twenty thousand pounds of Sir Benjamin in your own right."

"Pshaw! what business had you to tell her that?" cried the knight.

"Business!" exclaimed her Ladyship, "Why ain't it her own, and has not she a just right to be made sensible of what her father left her?—I'm sure dear Mr. Dimick, good man, left me too handsome for me not to follow the directions of his last will and testament."

"But why did you not tell her, you had the power of withholding it, if she did not marry to your liking?" returned Sir Benjamin.

"I might have told her so," answered Lady Buckhurst, "if I had thought of it."

"You *have* no thought," replied the knight, and ending his sentence with some words which it may be as well to suffer the imagination to supply, as to recount, he bounced out of the study, leaving her Ladyship a prey to the most disagreeable feelings.

CHAPTER XVI.

Old Friends with New Faces.

WHATEVER the head of a man of Colonel Buckhurst's disposition, has once decided to be desirable, he immediately mistakes for an emotion of the heart; thus the Colonel conceived himself both violently and tenderly in love with Amica.

Sir Benjamin was one of those fathers of weak intellects, who had indulged a son of strong passions in the gratification of his wishes, till he felt some degree of apprehension at the idea of disclosing to him a disappointment.—That apprehension was increased by his present state of indisposition; and supported only by the belief that the passion of his son for Amica was not of an extremely violent nature, or that some proofs of it would before

this period have made their appearance, he returned to his son's bed-chamber; the hesitation of the father informed the son what had been the result of Lady Buckhurst's application to her daughter.—"If she says, 'no', to my proposal," cried the Colonel, "depend upon it, that fellow Stanton stands in the way of my happiness, though she may not have chosen to tell her mother so."

"Yes," replied Sir Benjamin, "yes; she has mentioned as much to her mother already."

"The devil she has!" exclaimed the Colonel, "What can she see in him I wonder—nothing but an officer in a marching regiment—however she may be easily prevented from marrying him."

"I shall direct my wife to exert all her influence over her daughter to that end," replied Sir Benjamin.

"Exert your *own* influence," exclaimed the Colonel, "nobody can do it so effectually as yourself."

"How so?" asked Sir Benjamin.

"Why," returned Colonel Buckhurst, "what business have you ever to open

your doors again to Stanton; or to the old German fellow either? — If Amica sees neither of them to put her in mind of her attachment, it will soon drop to the ground, no doubt;—girls always like those men best, that are constantly about them;—How say you, Sir?"

"Why," returned Sir Benjamin, "that may be; but Mr. Leuwitzer stands in so near, so tender a situation with regard to Amica, that I can't see how, with any degree of propriety, it could be possible to refuse his seeing her at his return."

"Nonsense," cried the Colonel, "has not she found her mother now? and therefore can't want his protection any longer— If he is queer, you must tell him to bring in his bill to Lady Buckhurst for the maintenance, and so on, of her daughter; but you can't be bothered with his company any longer."

A pause ensued,——The Colonel broke it.—"Well, won't you?" he cried.

For the first time in his life, Sir Benjamin hesitated to give a ready affirmative to any plan of his son's; he regarded the shutting of his door upon Mr. Leuwitzer,

as an act which could not be justified by any principle or feeling of the human breast.—" Suppose," said he, " we could persuade Amica to marry you before Mr. Leuwitzer and Stanton return to England.

" It might be done, doubtless," returned the Colonel, "if you tell her mother to be at her about it every minute of the day —tell her to stick hard to her about it, will you ?"

" I will, I will, indeed," answered the Knight.

" But mind you do," returned the Colonel, " for upon my soul I don't think I shall ever get well of my wound, if she don't agree to have me.

" God forbid; don't think so," said his father.

" Oh I am damned if I shall," exclaimed the son.

" Well, pray get well," returned the Knight' " and I'll lead my lady the life of a dog till she brings her daughter to compliance."

" And don't let Amica write to the old fellow, or the young one either," said

the Colonel, "give orders for no letters to be carried out of the house without your seeing them."

"I will, I can do that without my wife's assistance you know," returned the Knight.

"To be sure you can," replied the Colonel, "If we mind our hits we shall do her at last."

"Oh yes,—yes," pronounced Sir Benjamin in a tone of doubt; and added, "Try and compose yourself; sleep if you can; and for Heaven sake don't think about dying: and I'll go and speak to my wife again directly."

On quitting his son's chamber, Sir Benjamin was met upon the stairs by his butler, who informed him that there was a gentleman below who desired to speak to him upon business.—Entering his study, where he was informed the stranger was waiting his coming, he perceived a middle aged man of genteel appearance, who addressed him by inquiring, whether there was not a lady in that house who had lately lost a diamond sprig?

Sir Benjamin replied in the affirmative; the lady, he said, was his daughter-in-law.

"My name, Sir," continued the stranger, "is Wilfort, I am a jeweller in Oxford-Street; a few days ago I received a message from this house, which was probably conveyed to all the followers of my business in town, requesting that if a diamond sprig of the value of about two hundred pounds, should be offered to me for sale, to give information of it here.—I have a person now waiting in my shop, who has brought such a trinket to me, requesting me to examine it, and give him a fair price for the stones; and I strongly suspect, that it is the very sprig which was lost at Lady Dellaval's masquerade; I have detained him while I came to inform you of the affair, by telling him that I know a lady who will like to purchase an article of the kind, and by pretending to him that I am gone to consult with her upon the purchase of it."

"Oh, there is no doubt but it is my daughter-in-law's," cried Sir Benjamin, "her's was in the shape of a half moon

at the bottom, with leaves and flowers growing out of the middle."

"Such exactly is the one I am informing you of," returned the jeweller.

"I am heartily glad to hear it," cried Sir Benjamin, "come, Sir, we'll order a couple of constables, and take the fellow into custody directly.

"Excuse me, Sir," returned Mr. Wilfort, "before we can proceed to measures of this serious nature, it is necessary that the lady to whom the article belongs, or some person who can identify it, should [go with us to my shop, and certify that it is the same."

"I can do that myself," replied the Knight, "my daughter shewed it to me within the first half hour after it was made a present to her, and I could swear to it any where."

This assertion was sufficient for Mr. Wilfort, and having procured the necessary officers, he led the way for Sir Benjamin to his shop;— they entered an inner apartment where Sir Benjamin found a man of a gentlemanly appearance of about fifty years

of age, lounging carelessly against a table, and reading a paper which he held in his hand.—

"Here is a gentleman, Sir," said Mr. Wilfort, introducing Sir Benjamin, "who will esteem it a favor to have a sight of the diamond sprig from which you wish to part."

The stranger made a slight bow, and drew from his pocket a case which he opened, and displayed the sprig in question.

The expression of Sir Benjamin's features gave intelligence to Mr. Wilfort, that the ornament was the one he expected to see; and the Knight addressing the stranger, said, "Pray, Sir, by what means did this article come into your possession?"

"That is a strange inquiry, Sir" said the man, "is it meant to insult me?"

"Because, Sir," continued Sir Benjamin, regardless of the question, and rendered bold by feeling confident that the sprig he beheld was Amica's, "I can swear that this ornament belongs to a lady of my family; and that she lost it a few evenings ago."

"Do you mean to insinuate that I robbed her of it?" cried the stranger in blustering accents—his colour changed from red to pale, and then again from pale to red, as he spoke; and turning to Mr. Wilfort he added, "I shall publish to the world, Sir, what treatment gentlemen meet with who come to deal at your shop."—and having uttered these words, he was moving towards the door.

Mr. Wilfort caught hold of one of his arms, and Sir Benjamin of the other; "Stay," cried the latter, "I shall not suffer you to depart, till you have informed me how this sprig came into your possession."

"The sprig is not mine," replied the man, "I was employed by a friend to sell it for him."

"You have it then in your power to save yourself from a very disagreeable situation, by informing us who that friend is, and bringing us to him," said Sir Benjamin, "for until we know who he is, we must in law consider you as the owner."

"What Sir, when I tell you that it belongs to another person," cried the defendant.

"What you tell us signifies nothing," replied Sir Benjamin, "proving alone is of efficacy in law;—I am a country justice myself, and understand these matters better than you may think for,—do you choose to tell us who this friend is?"

"His name is Fairfax," was the reply.

"Where can I see him?" the consequent demand.

"He left town for Wales about the beginning of the week, and I don't know where to direct to him just now."

"Well" returned the Knight, "if he employed you to sell his diamonds for him, and left England without giving you any direction where to send the money after him, he had a better opinion of you than I have; which I shall instantly give you a proof of, by taking you before the nearest magistrate:" at the conclusion of which sentence, he called to the constables, who were stationed at the shop door, and gave the apparent offender into their charge, directing them whither to conduct him.

"Remember, Sir," cried the man, addressing Sir Benjamin, "you may have to answer

for this conduct in a way you may not like."

"I know what I am about," returned Sir Benjamin, moving hastily forward.

It is astonishing that in the streets of London, where all is crowd and hurry, where the general bustle that prevails seems to imply that each is eager after the pursuit of his own affairs, that so many individuals should find leisure or inclination to turn aside from their own business, to inquire into that of an utter stranger, as are always seen in the train of any object which excites the slightest degree of curiosity;—But such is ever the case in that overgrown city of riot and confusion.—Three persons are enough to form a crowd, and like a snow-ball, it gathers size from every foot of ground it passes over.

Less than a quarter of an hour brought them with a train of more than an hundred spectators, to the door of the magistrate's house;—they speedily gained admittance to his presence, and Sir Benjamin related to him the case in question.

The magistrate asked the stranger what was his name?

"Mr. Effingham," was the reply.

This was succeeded by the same questions relative to the means by which the diamond sprig had come into his possession, &c. which Sir Benjamin had already put to him; and he returned the same answers as he had done when interrogated by him.

The magistrate said, that as Sir Benjamin had sworn to the identity of the diamond sprig, it was impossible that he could suffer Mr. Effingham to depart except upon bail, till he should have produced to him the Mr. Fairfax from whom he had received it for sale.—"Are you a house keeper Sir?" he continued.

Mr. Effingham replied in the negative.

"Where is your abode?

"I lodge at N°.—— in Covent Garden.

"Have you any friends whom you can procure to be bound for your appearance, when I shall call upon you for a re-examination of the business?"

"I certainly have friends, but I don't wish to trouble them about an affair of this kind."

"If you know yourself innocent, they can have no scruple in attending you."

No answer was given to this remark.

"Are you known to the people in whose house you lodge?—do you think your landlord would hold himself responsible for your being forth coming when you are called upon?"

"I am a stranger to him, I have lived in his house only four or five days."

"But you lived somewhere else before?"

"I am an idle man who spend my time in moving about from one spot to another;—I am seldom long in a place."

"Well, Sir," returned the magistrate, "I cannot propose any other plan for your accommodation, than those I have already mentioned; and as you appear unable to avail yourself of any one of them, you must submit to be kept in custody, till your friend Fairfax appears to release you."

After some hesitation, during which it appeared very evident that Mr. Effingham did not at all relish the idea even of a temporary residence in prison, he said, "I did to be sure mention that I believed Mr.

Fairfax had set out for Wales, but I am not certain that he is gone yet, and I'll send a note to inquire."

This was allowed to be done, and to the surprize of the magistrate the note was superscribed, "To Mr. Williams," and directed to the very house in Covent Garden, where Mr. Effingham had before said he lodged himself.

The note being dispatched, Sir Benjamin was informed, that his presence was not any longer absolutely requisite at that time; but choosing to be a witness of the termination of the affair, he remained in the house of the magistrate, awaiting the arrival of Mr. Effingham's friend; as did Mr. Wilfort the jeweller, who was actuated by the same curiosity.

A considerable time elapsed before the return of the messenger; he at last arrived accompanied by a young man of whom the collective appearance cannot be better described than by saying that he was shabbily genteel.

"Is this the gentleman at whose request you offered the diamond sprig for sale?"

asked the magistrate, addressing Mr. Effingham.

"Yes, that is Mr. Fairfax," he replied.

"*Alias* Williams," added the magistrate, with an emphasis on the first word.

Effingham bit his lip, with an expression of chagrin. His friend said, "Yes, Sir, alias Williams, if you please; for it is but a few days that I have changed my name, in consequence of some property left me by a distant relation."

The impudence of tone and manner with which these words were spoken drew a smile upon the countenance of the magistrate; he was accustomed to deal with characters of ready invention, such as he believed the pair undergoing his examination to be; and proceeding to explain the circumstances connected with the diamond sprig, desired the young man to acquaint him by what means he had become the possessor of it.

He replied, "That it had belonged to his wife, who was lately dead, and that she had bought it three years ago in Paris: a jeweller," he said, "had made it for her there, after a pattern of her own designing."

The magistrate's eye caught that of Mr. Wilfort, and he saw the same smile stealing over his features which had a little while before been raised upon his own. "What think you, Sir," he said, addressing the jeweller, "is this sprig of French manufacture?"

"No, Sir," replied Mr. Wilfort; "any person acquainted with my business will confirm me in declaring it English."

"It was made by an Englishman abroad," said Mr. Fairfax, alias Williams.

"The pattern, Sir, is English," rejoined Mr. Wilfort, "and was first made this winter by myself, and has since been copied by many jewellers."

With a coarse invective, very incongruous with the character of a gentleman which he had been attempting to support, Fairfax clenched his fist, and was directing it at Mr. Wilfort, as a reward for his interference, but by the agility of one of the officers at his side, the blow was prevented from taking effect.

"Upon a repetition of this conduct," said the magistrate, sternly, "I shall order in the handcuffs. This gentleman," pointing to

Sir Benjamin, "is still willing, notwithstanding all you have said in your defence, to repeat his oath of the ornament in question being the property of his daughter-in-law; it therefore remains only with you to find acceptable bail for your appearance at the ensuing sessions, or for you both immediately to be conveyed to prison."

"Both!" cried Effingham.

"Certainly," replied the magistrate: "your friend, for professing himself the owner of a property which is claimed by another person; and yourself for having offered a property of that nature to sale."

"It is damned hard that a man's word is not to be taken for his honesty," said Fairfax.

"As you have been of sufficient importance lately to change your name, a circumstance which we seldom know to occur except to men of large fortune, you have doubtless friends whose responsibility will rescue you from such a fate," remarked the magistrate.

"I certainly have friends," replied Fairfax, "and men of the first consequence too, but they are not in town just now."

The magistrate rose from his seat, and on leaving the apartment, beckoned to Sir Benjamin and the jeweller to follow him; having first given directions to his clerk to draw out a mittimus for the two suspected persons.

"What do you think of these men?" inquired Sir Benjamin of the magistrate, when they were out of the hearing of Effingham and his companion.

"My opinion of them," replied the magistrate, "is a very decided one indeed: I regard them as common sharpers, who hardened by success in the practice of their art, have at last become so impudent in their attempts as to have outwitted themselves. Nine sharpers out of ten bring themselves thus to public punishment by their over daring and carelessness."

"You think them guilty then?" said Sir Benjamin.

"I do," answered the magistrate; "and in order to render their punishment secure, you must make it your business to find the jeweller who manufactured the sprig, and cite him to appear as a witness against them on their

trial, which will not take place yet for some weeks.

Mr. Wilfort undertook to discover the maker of the sprig; and Sir Benjamin and he then quitted the house of the magistrate.

CHAPTER XVII.

In which that occurs twice in one Day to Amica which some Virgins are not so fortunate as to meet with once in their whole Lives.

ON entering the hall of his mansion, Sir Benjamin heard voices in his own apartment on the ground-floor, and on opening the door he found there his wife and Lady Dellaval engaged in conversation.

"You may come in, my dear," said Lady Buckhurst; "I am only giving Lady Dellaval the character of a servant I am going to part with—you may come in."

Our readers will probably exclaim, "Lady Dellaval condescending to perform any thing so domestic as to inquire a servant's character in person!" but let them grant us a moment's patience, and they shall learn that there was a motive for her so doing.

Sir Benjamin drew himself a chair near theirs, and recounted to them the occurrences

of which he had been a witness in the course of the three last hours. "Good Heavens!" exclaimed Lady Dellaval, "how very extraordinary that an ornament lost at a *fête* of mine should be found in the hands of sharpers; I can't conceive how it could possibly be; I am certain there were none but people of honour present."

"I make no doubt but you asked none but *genteel folks*," said Lady Buckhurst; "but still there is no saying who might contrive to get there: for those masquerades ain't like places where people are seen with their faces uncovered. Now there was a man, a gentleman I suppose, that I am sure I don't know who he was, handed Amica to the carriage;" and she then related the conversation which had passed between herself and mask in the habit of a livery-servant.

"Your daughter mentioned that circumstance to me," replied Lady Dellaval, "when I called here a day or two after my party, and I have made every inquiry, but can't learn who the mask in the green and gold livery was."

"Pray," asked Sir Benjamin, "have you found an owner for the picture that was dropped the same night?"

"No," returned Lady Dellaval; "nobody claims it."

The Knight was just beginning to remark that he considered that as extraordinary as the circumstances connected with Amica's diamond sprig, when the door of the apartment was thrown open, and Sir Jasper entered. The Knight rose to receive him, and exclaimed, for he had heard his foot upon the stairs, "Have you been paying a visit to the Colonel, Sir?"

"No, I believe not," said Lady Dellaval: "my father has only been chatting with Amica. We left him in the drawing-room with her, whilst Lady Buckhurst and I retired hither to settle our little affair."

Contrary to his usual habits, Sir Jasper did not appear either inclined to conversation, or to prolong his visit: accordingly, after the exchange of a few common-place sentences, Lady Dellaval and he departed.

They had been gone only a few minutes, when as Sir Benjamin and his lady were together ascending the stairs leading to the first floor, they heard a voice, which they knew to be Amica's, who was standing upon the landing on the outside of the drawing-room door,

say, "Pray be so kind as to carry that immediately to Lady Dellaval's, and beg that it may be given into Sir Jasper's own hands."

As they proceeded, they were met by a footman, who carried a small parcel neatly folded up in writing-paper.

"What have you got there, Sam?" asked Lady Buckhurst.

Sam replied, "That he did not know the contents," and pursued his way down stairs.

Since Amica's confession of her attachment to Maurice Stanton, her lady-mother felt herself by no means so complaisantly inclined towards her as she had been before this acknowledgment; and as narrow minds adopt little means of shewing their displeasure and irritation, her Ladyship now felt disposed to catch at every straw in order to make it a matter of contention between her daughter and herself; and therefore the moment she entered the drawing-room, she said, "What is that you have been sending to Sir Jasper Wormeaten?"

Amica's lips moved, but she did not instantly reply, appearing as if a confusion of feelings prevented her utterance. As she did

not immediately answer the question proposed to her, her mother exclaimed, "I thought you told me this morning you never used no artifices to conceal nothing from me, but here are more secrets though I see."

"No, indeed, Madam, you are mistaken," replied Amica; "I neither have any secrets from you, nor is it my wish to have any."

But yet you are not going to tell me what there is in that paper parcel you have sent to Sir Jasper."

"Yes, I am, Madam," answered Amica: "it contains a pearl bandeau which he brought hither this morning as a present to me; and which as I could not prevail upon him to take away with him again, I have thus returned to him."

Her Ladyship appeared astonished, both at the account of the present and Amica's resolution in returning it. "What could he offer to make you a present for?" she cried: "there must have been some reason for it."

"Why the old boy did it to shew his gallantry, I suppose," cried Sir Benjamin, "and repair to her the loss of her diamond sprig;" and this sentence he followed by beginning to

relate to her the circumstances which had that morning appeared in favour of her regaining it.

Her Ladyship stopped him in his narrative. "Do you hold your tongue a minute—will you?" she cried; "and let me hear the end of this story about Sir Jasper. Did he say any thing tender to you," she continued, addressing Amica, "at the time, or did his manner imply that he meant to do so hereafter?"

Amica blushed, and a forced smile strayed over her countenance.

"I can see it! I'd venture a half-a-crown wager upon it, that he has made you *the offer* already," said Lady Buckhurst: "has not he? Tell me, Amica; tell me, has he, or has he not? You know I am your mother, and I have a right to know."

Amica was obliged to confess that the conjecture was a just one.

"There!" exclaimed her Ladyship; "an offer from a Baronet: do you hear that, Sir Benjamin? You see she is not forced to go a begging for a husband, as I told you this morning, Sir. She has no occasion to *jump* at an offer, as you genteely asked if I did not,

think she would when your son proposed himself to her.—No, no! I think the Dimicks may hold their heads as high as the Buckhursts, and a little higher too now."

This contention, to which Amica had herself innocently given rise, added so materially to the unpleasantness of her feelings, which had been already wretched enough before, that she left the room, with difficulty suppressing her tears till she had gained her chamber.

How long Sir Benjamin and his Lady disputed about their family pretensions to pride, we imagine none of our readers are anxious to learn: we think also that they will readily allow us to pass over the hyperbolical nonsense in which Sir Jasper's confession of his passion was made to our heroine, and will be content with being informed that Lady Dellaval contrived to amuse Lady Buckhurst, by the pretence of learning a servant's character, in order to leave her father alone with the object of his passion; and that he was not less astonished at Amica's blindness to her own happiness, than mortified at the downfall of his air-built bliss, which was caused by her decisive negative to the modest request of her antiquated admirer.

In the course of about half an hour Lady Buckhurst followed her daughter to her chamber, and her conduct now afforded an example of how common a custom it is, for persons to be biassed in thinking favourably or unfavourably of others, by circumstances, which the individual towards whom their conduct changes has had no share in producing.

"Well, child," cried her Ladyship, "I can't exactly make up my mind whether you were right or not to say 'No' to Sir Jasper. To be sure he is very old, and does many things that are very silly for a man of his age; aye, and some things that are very wicked for a man of *any* age, as they tell me: but then you know there is this to be considered, he is a Baronet, and very rich; and perhaps if he married a young wife, he might leave off his tricks, and might reform in other respects. To be sure you could not expect to live long with him; but then no doubt but he'd leave you handsome at his death; that is, I'd take care he *should*, for I'd *see* to your settlement before I suffered him to lead you to the altar, if you were to turn the matter over in your thoughts, and have him at last."

Amica replied, "That she was certain that would never be the case."

"Well, well, I shall take care to set it about in the world that you have had the offer," returned Lady Buckhurst, "it is not a thing to shut one's mouth upon."

"Indeed, Madam," answered Amica, "I think it a circumstance upon which honour demands our silence; if we cannot reconcile ourselves to accept as a husband a man who may propose himself to us in that light, we undoubtedly owe him the return of not publishing, that we cannot approve him sufficiently to unite our fate with his."

"Fiddlestick child," cried her Ladyship, "all that is like what there is said in novels; and all very good and right to be set forth in such books; but there are many reasons that alter the case in real life;—depend on it, when it is once known that you have had a baronet at your knees, and that you made him get up again as he knelt down, you'll have many men of real quality making proposals to you."

"It is what I am very, very far from desiring," said Amica.

"Now don't provoke me, child;—don't provoke me Amy," returned her mother, "don't let me hear another hint about that Stanton—I can't bear it; you'll forfeit all my love and affection, if you don't give him up—depend upon it, you'll live to thank me for driving him out of your head—a pretty story it would be truly; Lady Buckhurst's daughter married to Mr. Stanton—and who is Mr. Stanton?—why nobody knows, nor nobody cares.—Oh, I could not bear it;—I'd sooner wish, Heaven forgive me! that I'd never seen you again after I first lost you—no, no,—I'll marry you to some man worth having, if you let me alone for a while, and let me keep quietly on the look out; and if I should fail, but I am sure I shan't, at least I think not, and I am sure I hope not; but I say, if I should fail; you won't be without a string to your bow then; here will be the Colonel always ready to take you: you'll always have him for a *cord in preserve* *, as Mr. Valmont expresses it in French."

Amica did not feel herself defective in arguments which she might have opposed to

* *Corps de reserve,* we fancy Mr. Valmont said.

the erroneous opinions of her mother; but fearful that all dissention on her part from Lady Buckhurst's ideas, might but serve to strengthen her in them, she contented herself with repeating, "Do not, dear Madam, ever urge me to accept the hand of a man whom I cannot love, and I will never ask you to receive Maurice Stanton as your son."

Happily for Amica, Lady Buckhurst's rejoinder was interrupted by a summons to dinner, and they accordingly descended into the eating-room;—their meal was again a *tête-à-tête;* Sir Benjamin was gone to dine with some of his friends, and take their opinion upon what measures it would be most adviseable for him to pursue in his present ex-senatorial state.—The question upon which he was undecided was this, whether he should immediately again propose himself for Guildford; or reserve all his force for a general election, which would take place throughout the kingdom in a very short time, as parliament was to be dissolved at the expiration of six more weeks.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Try Again.

FAMILY secrets usually circulate very rapidly when the mistress of the house makes a confidante of her waiting woman, as we have seen that Lady Buckhurst did of her servant Lenox.

On the day following that on which Sir Jasper had paid his unsuccessful visit to Amica, Lady Dellaval's woman, Mrs. Archer returned the visit which it may be remembered Mrs. Lenox had paid to her a few evenings before.

"Well," cried Lenox, referring to what they had overheard pass in Lady Dellaval's dressing-room between her Ladyship and Mr. Leuwitzer, "well, have you heard any more about your lady's situation? Have you found out what *the child* meant? Do you really think she is in *that way?*"

"I can't for my life make it out," replied Mrs. Archer, "my lady is grown quite an altered woman since she was closeted with that old foreign gentleman: always in thought; never chats with me now as she used to do; sits by hours together alone in her chamber; and what is more than that, I have seen her three or four different times poring over a miniature picture;—I caught a glimpse of it once, just enough to see it was a gentleman; and I can't help thinking to myself that if she is with child, that is the picture of the father."

"It is very odd, to be sure," returned Lenox, "but she is not the only odd person in your family: I suppose you have heard of Sir Jasper's fancy."

"No, not I; what do you mean?" asked Mrs. Archer.

"Why what do you think of an old fellow like him, making an offer of marriage to a young Miss, young enough to be his grand-daughter? and that is his *fancy*;—he made such a proposal yesterday to my lady's daughter," returned Lenox.

"And is it *to be?*" inquired Mrs. Archer.

"No, no," answered Lenox, "she returned him a fine present he brought her, and sent him about his business; why at this moment Miss Amica has it in her power to marry one of the finest, gayest, dashingest gentlemen in all London."

"And who may he be?" said Mrs. Archer.

"Why, our Colonel as I call him; Col. Buckhurst," replied Lenox, "I am sure to my taste, I think there ain't a finer fellow any where, for he looks so rakish, and so fashionable; and between ourselves I fancy your lady would not be sorry if Miss Amica's chance were hers."

"Oh, *they'll* never marry depend upon it," rejoined Archer, "they know one another too well; and is Miss Dimick to have the Colonel?"

"Why my lady did not exactly tell me all was settled," answered Lenox, "but I have no doubt of its being so;—her refusing Sir Jasper so decidedly, tells pretty plainly how it is, because I warrant me, if her mind had not been made up to the Colonel, she would have let the old Baronet dangle after her a little while, though she might not intend to marry him at last."

By the conversation which we have just detailed between these two nymphs of the toilet, it will easily be perceived, that Lady Buckhurst in her communications to Lenox, had entirely sunk the name of Maurice Stanton, and had mentioned to her only those offers of marriage to her daughter, which she wished to be circulated in the world, as spurs to others of a like nature to follow them.

When Lady Dellaval retired to her chamber at night, and Archer attended to undress her; "I have been so remiss to-day," said her Ladyship, "as to have forgotten to send to inquire after Colonel Buckhurst; does any body in this house by accident know how he does?"

"Oh your La'ship," returned Archer, "Colonel Buckhurst can't be doing otherwise than well, as he is going to be married."

"Going to be married!" exclaimed Lady Dellaval.

"Is it news to your La'ship?" replied Archer, "Bless me! oh yes m'em, it is all settled between him and my Lady Buckhurst's daughter, Miss Amica—what's her name?"

"Surely it can't be true;—what authority have you for it?" asked Lady Dellaval.

"Your La'ship may rely on it, it is a fact," returned Archer;—her mistress made no rejoinder to her last assertion, and the conversation ceased.

On the following morning between the hours of nine and ten, Lady Dellaval rang her bell, and when Archer entered her chamber in reply to the summons, she directed her to send Sir Jasper's valet to his master's apartment, to request that he would breakfast with her in her dressing-room.

The Baronet accepted his daughter's invitation, and at about a quarter after eleven, he hobbled into the dressing-room with one hand rested on a crutch-stick; for the irritation which the disappointment he had a couple of days before met with, had produced in his system, had settled, in the angry form of the gout, into his left foot.

How happy would it be for the masculine gender *in toto,* if those disappointment in love, which some of them must be doomed to experience, could be carried off without occasioning pain in any more sensitive part;—and the only receipt which we can give them to avoid

the endurance of severer mischiefs from a case of this kind, is, never to propose themselves as husbands, till like Sir Jasper, they have passed the grand climacteric of life; they will then find that love only occupies the head; except the force of disappointment drive him down into the great toe, but that the heart has nothing whatever to do with the business.

The Baronet being seated at his ease, Lady Dellaval proceeded to give him information of the intelligence she had received from her waiting woman.—The spirits of Sir Jasper it may easily be imagined, were far from being amended by these tidings; he had entertained hopes, that either the timidity and bashfulness natural to a young female, might have governed Amica in pronouncing a negative to his wishes; or, that at the very worst, whatever little repugnances she might have felt to accepting his hand, the persuasions of her mother, and her own reflections on the enviable situation of life in which an alliance with him must place her, would shortly overcome;—of a rival he had not dreamt;—that rival now appeared in a more formidable light than the being of a vision; for consider-

ing men only according to their exterior, and the rank by which they were known in society, he regarded the Colonel as a man whom in the privacy of his own breast, he believed more likely than himself to please Amica.

Although he spoke not, the expression of his countenance eloquently conveyed to Lady Dellaval, what was passing in his mind; and conceiving herself to have done all that could be required of her in favour of his interest, by having given him a subject for reflection, or discussion, she likewise forbore to speak. —During this silence, "The Fashionable World," was brought into the room, and laid down upon the breakfast table.

A newspaper is a most efficacious modulator of the human passions; in its perusal a man who is puffed up with joy, discovers that he is not singular in the attainment of good; and he who has encountered misfortune, learns that he has brethren in affliction.—Sir Jasper immediately took up the paper; he knew that there was a species of relief to the mind to be derived from perusing it, although his perceptions were not perhaps sufficiently acute to enable him to analize how that relief was produced.

One of the first paragraphs which arrested his attention, announced that a dissolution of parliament was very shortly expected to take place; and the sentence which succeeded this, gave intelligence of Sir Benjamin Buckhurst's privation of his senatorial honours.

"Ah!" cried the Baronet, "this must be a material stab to Sir Benjamin's feelings."

"It must, I am certain," replied Lady Dellaval, "because he is a man who only lives in the idea of being a member; it is astonishing how many unsuccessful attempts he has made to procure a seat in the house, and they have all been attended with very considerable expence; his Guildford contest is reported to have dipped into twelve thousand."

Sir Jasper laid down the paper, and his contracted brow bespoke him to be ruminating with his own mind;—after a considerable pause he said, "A method presents itself to me, by which it appears, that I can render myself of such essential service to the interest, and inclinations of Sir Benjamin, that he will in return be actuated to exert his influence for the hand of his daughter-in-law to become mine, in preference to the Colonel's."

"Indeed," replied Lady Dellaval, "what are your ideas?"

"Why you know," Sir Jasper returned, "I have the borough of Pliable in my gift; that is, I am always able to bias the votes of the seven electors in whose power it lies; and I am of opinion, that if I were to promise to place Sir Benjamin Buckhurst in it at the next election, entirely free of expence, that an arrangement would soon be made for my becoming the husband of the beautiful Amica."

"If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly:" says Macbeth, speaking of murder, and we think the same sentence a very appropriate exclamation to proceed from the lips of an old man of sixty-five who entertains ideas of matrimony with a young girl, for the possession of whom he is to depend upon the authority of her parents, and not upon the free exercise of her own inclinations; first, because the *quickly*, is undoubtedly natural to a man who has no time to lose; and secondly because the case itself bears a very strong affinity to the murderous intentions of the Scottish Thane:—Sir Jasper accordingly had no sooner con-

ceived his plan for approaching the heart of Amica through the vain inclinations of her father-in-law, than he dispatched a note to him requesting an interview with him at his own house at one o'clock that day, upon a matter of great consequence to the happiness of them both.

Sir Benjamin flattered by the idea of there being any circumstance in existence wherein his own interests were allied with those of a man of Sir Jasper's superior rank, returned an answer wherein he specified that he should expect the honour of his visit with the greatest pride and satisfaction.

Upon the receipt of this intelligence our Baronet ordered his chariot to be in waiting for him at a quarter of an hour before the time of appointment, and then retired to his dressing-room to waste the intervening space of time in what he called, the pleasing labours of the toilet.

Sir Jasper had been only a few minutes set out on his matrimonial embassy, when Sidney Valmont arrived in Portman-square, on a morning visit to Lady Dellaval.

When he had communicated to her the reigning topics of scandal, which each day

furnishes for the amusement of the idle in the refined circles of fashion; her Ladyship, who was anxious to hear a positive confirmation, or refutation of the report which had reached her of Colonel Buckhurst's projected union with Amica, and who considered Valmont to be one of the persons most likely to be possessed of a knowledge of the truth, said, "Now you appear to have concluded all the other information with which you are acquainted, pray tell me when Buckhurst becomes a benedict?"

"Buckhurst marry!" exclaimed Sidney Valmont, "I should as soon have expected to hear such a thing of the pope:—for heaven's-sake is this a *badinage* of your own fabricating, or has any other mortal been sufficiently flighty to circulate such a quiz?"

"So you may please to term it," replied her Ladyship, "and if you really know nothing of the matter, you afford me an additional instance of the coldness of male friendship, compared with that which we women feel for those towards whom we profess ourselves friends.—Upon my honour, I have authority which I regard as undoubted,

for saying that he has very lately made an offer of his hand; which I think you must allow appears a most satisfactory evidence of his intention to become a husband."

"If your Ladyship confesses that you are the selected fair one, my contradictory sentiments are at an end; but otherwise, *pardonnez moi*, I know so much of the Colonel, that I must continue an infidel to the report," answered Valmont.

Lady Dellaval heard him with a smile, and when he ceased speaking, she imparted to him the channel through which the intelligence had reached her, and added, "are you an infidel still?"

"Ten times more than ever," replied Valmont, "for placing the Colonel entirely out of the question, I would take upon me to affirm, that there is but one man in the world capable of making an impression on the heart of the lady; had they selected any other female, the report might have gained a doubtful kind of credit; and lived through the period of an ephemera's life; but that girl has been so romantically in love ever since I knew her, that *en verité*"—

"Amica romantically in love!" exclaimed Lady Dellaval, "impossible! so constantly as I have been with her, I must have heard the smothered sigh, or observed the languishing air of love; besides I have not the slightest doubt, that from the kindness and friendship I have shewn her, she would long ere this have admitted me to her confidence, had such been the case."

"*Victoire!*" cried Valmont, "in those very words, you adduce an instance in point, to prove that female friendship of the unrestrained openness of which you have just been bragging, may have its concealments too; and after all is not more than upon a par of excellence with that professed by our sex: I tell you that your friend Amica, is the most absolutely love-smitten being in existence, *elle en meurt.*"

"And pray," returned Lady Dellaval, "if the lady is dying, for whom is she dying?—if a woman be allowed to be any judge of the attractions of her sex, I think the man who would not consider himself the happiest of human beings, to be possessed of the power of restoring so exquisite a girl to life and felicity, can at best have no quarrel against

those, who should term him a most insensible animal."

"*Mais ma belle vindicatrice,*" replied Valmont, "The man is by no means insensible of his happiness, he wears a constant smile in her presence, and secure in the possession of her heart, appears to bid defiance to the obstacles which oppose themselves to their union."

"Obstacles!" exclaimed Lady Dellaval, "but why do you not tell me who he is?"

"That is more than I am acquainted with," replied Valmont, "I can much more easily tell you what he is, *pis que rien! soumis à la fortune de la guerre;* and is not that a sufficient obstacle to his becoming the husband of the daughter of a purse-proud old woman like Lady Buckhurst?"

"Have done with your comments," cried Lady Dellaval, "or at least reserve them till you have told me who he is;—do I know him?—what is his name?"

"He was," returned Valmont, "at your masquerade; but I hardly suppose you saw him. Did you know that there was a Mr. Stanton present?"

"Stanton!" stammered out Lady Dellaval. "What he who looked so very—He who was so much—that is—he who acted as second to Colonel Buckhurst?"

"Quite correct," cried Sidney.

"And are you sure—are you really certain that *he* is the favoured lover of Lady Buckhurst's daughter?" asked Lady Dellaval.

Valmont replied by informing her of what he was unconscious that she already knew, that Stanton was the *protegé* of Mr. Leuwitzer; to which he added, that Maurice had, nearly three years ago, made no secret to him of the attachment which subsisted between himself and Amica.

Forcing a smile, her Ladyship said, "For once, Valmont, I entreat you to be serious; and inform me, whether what you have been telling me be a fact or not?"

"Upon my honour," replied Valmont, "what possible motive could I have for deceiving you in a point of this nature? But I declare, *mon amie*, your earnestness compels me to smile; and you must excuse me, if I conceive that you are not the less pleased to hear that the Colonel is not about

to become a Benedict while you remain—*pardonnez moi, ma belle veuve;* I cannot say more, but I really have my suspicions that the Colonel is a most happy man in possessing the good wishes of one of the finest women in England for his *felicité*."

"If you are angling for a compliment by baiting your hook with one, you have wasted a good thing to no purpose this morning," returned her Ladyship; "I have a head-ach, and cannot talk to you any more."

"Then you will persist in believing that Buckhurst has resolved on matrimony?" said Valmont with an arch smile.

"I must sleep it off," replied Lady Dellaval, alluding to the head-ach of which she had before spoken. "Good night!" and letting her head sink upon one of the pillows of the sofa, she refused to join any longer in conversation with the divine; who, probably not liking to be the sole speaker any where out of a church, hastily departed, in search of a new auditor for the scandal with which his researches of that morning had furnished him.

CHAPTER XIX.

Mystery.

LADY Dellaval continued on the sofa lost in her own reflections, till they were broken in upon by the return of Sir Jasper.

The Baronet's countenance was expressive of the warmest satisfaction, and placing himself by her side, he recounted to her the event of his visit; which was that Sir Benjamin had received the proposition of the borough with the most undisguised transport, had acknowledged himself under an infinite obligation to our Baronet, and had promised to exert his influence in the most decided manner for the accomplishment of Sir Jasper's favourite object.

"Then you did not see Amica?" said her Ladyship.

Sir Jasper replied, "That he had seen only Sir Benjamin; that a lady and gentleman from Rochester had arrived that morning

at the house, with whom Lady Buckhurst and her daughter were gone out in the carriage. They are, I understand," added he, "all to be at Covent-Garden theatre this evening; I shall of course make an effort to join them there, as Sir Benjamin has promised to reserve me a seat in the box."

Notwithstanding Sir Jasper's spirits were risen a great many degrees since his interview with Sir Benjamin, he still found the nervous cordial necessary to the sustentation of his system, and left the drawing-room for the purpose of taking the invigorating draught; the moment he was gone, Lady Dellaval drew towards her the table upon which stood her writing-desk, and placing herself before it, she composed the following note.

"MY DEAR GIRL,

"You will probably be surprised at receiv-
"ing from me this mysterious epistle; for as
"such it must doubtless appear to you: there-
"fore ere you proceed to peruse its contents,
"receive the assurance of its writer being
"your sincere friend. The happiness of
"your future life, my dear Amica, is at this
"moment at stake, and I am perhaps the only

" person whose interference can ensure it to " you: but before I proceed to act in your " cause, it is necessary that I should see and " converse with you. I have a particular " reason for not visiting you at this juncture, " at a time when I am likely to encounter any " part of your family; if therefore you will " frame an excuse for not accompanying " them to the theatre this evening, I will call " upon you at seven, and we may then pass a " few hours together uninterrupted. For " your own sake, do not refuse to see me: " let it be sufficient upon this paper to inform " you, that I do not come to plead the cause " either of Sir Jasper Wormeaten, or of Colo- " nel Buckhurst. My feelings are infinitely " more in unison with yours, than you can " have any reason to suppose them from the " conversation which once passed between us " relative to my father. My sentiments are " now changed: I shall doubtless astonish, " and I trust delight you. If you do not " consent to see me at seven, you will be doing " an injustice to yourself, and to one of the " sincerest of your friends.

" CATHERINE DELLAVAL.

" *Portman-square, three o'clock.*"

The note being written, her Ladyship dismissed one of her servants with it into Hanover-square, ordering him to say, that he would either wait for an answer then, or return for one at five o'clock, which ever best suited the convenience of her to whom it was addressed.

In the course of an hour, the servant came back, and put into the hands of Lady Dellaval, the following note.

"MY DEAR MADAM!

"You have indeed greatly surprised me by "the contents of the billet I have just re-"ceived from you. I have already expe-"rienced so much civility and kindness at "your hands, that I should act most unjusti-"fiably in considering you in any other light "than the sincere friend which you profess "yourself towards me.

"Your request has awakened within my "mind so great a degree of curiosity for an "explanation of the mystery in which your "conduct is now enfolded, that I should "inflict on myself as severe a disappointment "as it could possibly prove to you, were I to "refuse seeing you this evening at seven.—

"I have already a very bad cold, which will "furnish me with an excuse for not accom-"panying my mother and her friends to the "theatre. Adieu, dear Madam!

"Believe me truly your's,

"AMICA.

"*Hanover-square, 4 o'clock.*"

Great indeed, as Amica had expressed it, was the surprise which Lady Dellaval's epistle had excited in her breast. "I do not," she had said, "come to plead either in favour of Sir Jasper or of Colonel Buckhurst, but to promote your happiness." Did not that avowal, Amica considered, seem to imply that her Ladyship was acquainted with her attachment to Maurice Stanton? Undoubtedly it did; but if she were acquainted with it, by what possible means could she be empowered to promote their union?—"Oh no!" continued Amica, "feeling myself that no other event can produce me happiness, I have misconstrued the intentions of Lady Dellaval, by dressing them in my own ideas." As she proceeded to indulge in reflection, she recollected the circumstances of the miniature; and with them recurred to her memory

the opinion which she had at that time adopted of Lady Dellaval being herself charmed with the person of Maurice: this remembrance afforded her a further conviction that the happiness at which her Ladyship had hinted was entirely distinct from him.

The next recollection which entered her mind was that of the conversation between Lady Dellaval and Mr. Leuwitzer which had been overheard by the waiting-maids; and as she dwelt upon the strangeness of the exclamation which her Ladyship had at that time uttered, "Oh that I had a father for my child!" she began to think it by no means impossible that her Ladyship might have discovered herself about to become a mother, since the period at which she had recommended to her to accept the hand of Sir Jasper; and supposing that notwithstanding the negative she had already returned to his hopes, she might ultimately intend to bestow on him her hand, was coming to propose to her some equivalent for giving him up in order to favour the rights of the child still unborn.

It was not without some difficulty that Amica prevailed on her mother to accept her excuse for not going to the play.

The presence of the visitors had prevented Sir Benjamin from communicating the subject of the conversation which had passed between himself and Sir Jasper that morning to his wife, which was a fortunate circumstance for Amica; as had her mother known that the Baronet intended to honour their box with his presence that evening, there could be no doubt but that in spite of her cold, she would have compelled her daughter to visit the theatre, in order that Sir Jasper's attention to her might be publicly witnessed.

CHAPTER XX.

More Mystery.

A Few minutes after the hour of appointment, Lady Dellaval arrived in Hanover-square, and was shewn into the apartment where Amica with a palpitating heart was expecting her.

Amica we have already seen did not consider Lady Dellaval in so reprehensible a light as the world in general did: Amica believed her frequently to be faulty, but never vicious: she considered her to lean with a culpable weakness towards the sway of fashion, but believed her never to commit those errors which originate in a depraved heart. She imagined want of reflection to be the greatest criminality of which she was guilty, as she performed many actions in the flightiness of the moment, and in the hurry of overflowing spirits, which various points of her character bore evidence that her

mind would have revolted at the deliberate performance of. Such are the baneful habits contracted by bending the knee too obsequiously at the shrine of Fashion; such are the ill effects which arise from a desire of being pre-eminent in those follies for which the mind imbibes a taste, because it is not strengthened against their influence by being sown at an early age with the beneficial seeds of wisdom and reflection.

Having entered the apartment, Lady Delaval approached Amica, and taking her hand pressed it fervently in her own. When the servant had closed the door, she said, "I rejoice, my dear girl, both for your sake and my own, that you have received me this evening. Do you see me as a sincere friend?"

"I can have no reason," replied Amica, "to doubt the sincerity of those professions I have received from you. Had you not made me any, my nature is not so uncharitable as to doubt whether kindness of heart accompanies civility of action; and I stand indebted to you for numberless favours of this nature."

"I have never doubted the excellence of your disposition," rejoined Lady Dellaval, "and the only reason why I asked the question to which you have just been replying is, that unless you do believe me sincerely your friend, you will consider the freedom with which I am about to address you as a mark of impertinence, rather than of interest in your welfare."

"I am certain," returned Amica, "that after the friendly preface which precedes the disclosure of the subject upon which I see you here, that I at least shall not deem you guilty of such a fault. Pray speak freely; only I hope that you will allow me the same freedom in disclosing my sentiments which I am ready to allow to you."

"I have already told you," replied her Ladyship, "that I came hither for your happiness and my own: where any concealment is necessary, felicity cannot be perfect. I trust we shall both have cause to rejoice at some future period in the frankness which I hope will attend our present communications."

"Your epistle," said Amica, "has, as I informed you in my reply to it this afternoon,

excited within me a very strong degree of curiosity."

"I will proceed immediately," answered Lady Dellaval, "to unravel some part of the mystery which perplexes you: but you must have patience with me if I am more deliberate than exactly corresponds with your eagerness; and you must not be angry, if I do not entirely elucidate to you this evening the motives by which I am actuated. Only rely on this, that you shall know all ere long, and that you will then perceive I am justified in my present precautions."

A momentary pause ensued; Lady Dellaval broke it: "You will think me very tiresome, I make no doubt; for I am going to ask you many questions which you will think it extremely immaterial whether they be answered or not: but believe me that I will not weary you with one demand to which it is not requisite, for the promotion of the interest I take in your welfare, that I should have a reply."

Amica perceived that the agitation of mind, which had been visible on Lady Dellaval's countenance at her first arrival, increased as she drew nearer to the point of disclosure for

which Amica was so impatiently waiting, and once more begged her to proceed.

"You have," said Lady Dellaval, "returned a negative to the offer of marriage which has been made you by my father?"

"Sir Jasper has doubtless told you so," said Amica.

"Yes, my dear," replied Lady Dellaval, "he has; but I can proceed in the plan with which my head is now filled, only on the most undoubted certainty. I must have your word of honour for many circumstances which I already know from the report of the world. Sir Jasper," proceeded her Ladyship, "has promised Sir Benjamin Buckhurst a seat free of expence in the ensuing parliament, upon condition of his prevailing on you to accede to his proposal of marriage. Has this yet been mentioned to you?"

Amica replied in the negative.

"Are you," rejoined Lady Dellaval, "secure within yourself that you will not be tempted by the arguments of Sir Benjamin, or your mother, to yield to this alliance out of consideration to the advantages which the family to whom you are allied would derive from such a compliance?"

"I am," replied Amica, "fully resolved that no consideration shall impel me to unite myself with a man whom I could not treat with that affection which every wife owes to a husband, and I am sure I could never thus regard or esteem Sir Jasper."

A smile, which Amica could not forbear understanding as a smile of pleasure, stole over the features of Lady Dellaval, and she added, "I am happy to see that you do not appear offended with me, for the candid avowal I have made concerning one so nearly related to you."

"Oh no, no!" replied Lady Dellaval, with warmth, "I am not offended I assure you—very far indeed from being offended. Had your sentiments proved the reverse of what they are upon this point, I should have experienced no inconsiderable disappointment. Is not this a strange confession, Amica? for you cannot have forgotten that on the night of my masquerade, not many days ago, I strongly recommended to you to become his wife; nay, to be as honest with you as our mutual compact demands that I should, two hours before I wrote to you this

morning my sentiments had not undergone any change."

"So suddenly has your opinion been altered!" exclaimed Amica: "so lately is it since"——

She would have proceeded, but Lady Dellaval interrupted her by continuing to speak thus, "Make no comments for the present on what I tell you: it is impossible that you should have the remotest idea of the cause from which my actions spring, and it is therefore equally impossible that you should be able to judge of their propriety. Once more, dear girl, give me a patient hearing."

Amica bowed in silence.

"Since the wound which Colonel Buckhurst received in the duel, has he not also become a suitor for your hand?"

'Yes," replied Amica, "such a proposal has been made to me on the part of the Colonel."

"And is it in his favour?" asked Lady Dellaval, fixing her eyes stedfastly on Amica, and her lips quivering with agitation as she spoke: "and is it in his favour that you have rejected Sir Jasper?"

"Oh no, Madam," answered Amica; "Colonel Buckhurst is a man to whom I should feel myself equally inadequate to perform the duties of a wife as to Sir Jasper Wormeaten."

A sigh, which appeared the effect of a sensation of relief communicated to her breast this declaration, burst from the lips of Lady Dellaval. "I thought," she said; "nay, I felt persuaded that you could not be going to be united to Colonel Buckhurst; and you perceive my heart was a true prophet: was it not, Amica?"

"Indeed it was, Madam," Amica replied.

"There is a wide difference," returned her Ladyship, "between our avowal of the men whom we reject as husbands and the favoured one whom we admit as a lover: I think I can extend my prophecy a little farther, and divine who he is to whom the refusal which is causing a heart-ach to my father and the Colonel would *not* be extended." Lady Dellaval paused, and again her eyes were fixed in steady inquiry on the countenance of Amica.

Amica spoke not: she had promised Lady Dellaval openness and sincerity in her com-

munications, and she now almost regretted having made the promise. To no other being would she have felt a repugnance in confessing the image of Maurice Stanton to be indelibly graven on her heart; but in the recollection of the emotion which she had seen her Ladyship display on the morning of her producing the miniature which bore some resemblance to his features, all remembrance of the friendship she had promised to her faded away: she considered her only as a rival, whose fair promises might perhaps be intended to extend no farther than to the act of treating her with a bewitching kindness; and becoming faint and sick under the apprehensions which her fancy had conjured up, she could with difficulty support herself from falling off her seat. The violence of her emotion was too great to escape the observation of Lady Dellaval, who instantly springing up from her chair stood opposite to her, and again clasping her hand in her's exclaimed, "Dearest girl, what is it you apprehend? What dreadful agitation is it that shakes your nerves? Why do you thus suddenly appear to fear me? For God's sake, do not render me wretched by withdrawing from me

your confidence at the moment I most earnestly wish it to be extended towards me. One single word will relieve the anxiety of us both: tell me—I beseech you, tell me, is not Mr. Stanton in possession of your heart?"

The tears rushed into the eyes of Amica; a violent trembling seized her; and with a lengthened sigh, she sunk back in her chair.

"Dear girl!" exclaimed Lady Dellaval, "what means this incomprehensible conduct? Do you regard me as his enemy? Surely that cannot be! If such be the case, you know not how very false a supposition you have formed. Amica, hear me; believe me; Maurice Stanton possesses my tenderest affection as well as your's."

Endeavouring to raise herself from her seat as she spoke, and gasping for breath between her words as she forced them with difficulty from her lips, Amica said, "Is this, Lady Dellaval, the friendship which you promised, and boasted of? Was it not sufficient that I should find enemies to my happiness amidst those whose interest ought to be the nearest allied with my own, but that you should have borrowed the garb of friendship to add an

unprovoked insult to the difficulties with which I am already surrounded?"—As she uttered these words, she succeeded in her efforts to rise from her chair, and snatching away her hand from Lady Dellaval, was moving with trembling steps towards the door of the apartment.

Lady Dellaval threw herself in her way, and in a voice the most energetic, exclaimed, "Merciful Heaven! whither are your ideas hurrying you? I am this moment supremely blest, and require only an instant's attention from you to render you equally happy with myself. Enough has passed to prove to me, that you love Stanton. I have received the conviction for which I panted when I entered this house: it only remains for me to tell you, that I pledge my word for your being eventually blessed with each other."

The shock of apprehended infelicity which had been experienced by Amica a few moments before, was trivial when compared with the sensation of an opposite nature which now burst upon her senses. Of the sounds which had reached her ear she was incredulous, till they were repeated to her by Lady Dellaval, who clasping her to her

bosom as she uttered them, added, "The love which I bear Stanton is of that nature, that it will be my greatest pride to behold him the husband of so excellent a girl as yourself!"

CHAPTER XXI.

The Bride.

AN author is not obliged to divulge the secrets of his history before his own time, we shall therefore avail ourselves of that privilege which the right of custom has given us for dropping the curtain for the present upon Lady Dellaval and Amica; only stating that her Ladyship quitted Hanover-square sufficiently early for Amica to be retired to rest, before the return of Lady Buckhurst and her party, and that previously to her departure, she informed our heroine, "that she should leave London on the following morning, and probably be absent from it, for at least three weeks; but promised her that the very moment of her return, she would call upon her.

Entirely unsuspicious of her daughter having any other motive than the one she

had assigned for absenting herself from the theatre, Lady Buckhurst passed an evening of enjoyment at her favourite amusement ;—Her country friends being even more unaccustomed than herself to the sights of London, had gone to the play actually and merely for the purpose of beholding the stage performances, and as they had expressed a wish not to quit the house, till these were concluded, the carriage had been ordered not to attend till that hour.

Just at that period when the lobbies usually overflow, in consequence of the loungers quitting their seats in the boxes, and resorting to the last scene of the evening's entertainments, Lady Buckhurst's carriage was announced to be almost at the door; her Ladyship taking the arm of her Rochester friend, and Sir Benjamin having lent the use of his to his friend's wife, (for Sir Jasper having found Amica not to be of the party, had quitted the house) they sallied forth, pursuing the steps of the servant, who had summoned them from their box.

When they arrived in that passage which forms the branch of communication between

the box lobby and the piazza, they found themselves hemmed in, by an immense crowd, where they were for some minutes obliged to remain, as the driving up of their coach had been retarded by the interference of other carriages.

Whilst they were thus enjoying the luxury of breathing the air of a London crowd, Lady Buckhurst, who had placed her hand as a guardian upon her watch, received an alarm which was occasioned by the hand of a man thrusting itself between two females who stood before her, and seizing hold of that one of her's, which we have already said was placed sentry over her property :—Fire and thieves had run constantly in her Ladyship's head ever since her arrival in the metropolis, and supposing an attack to be intended upon her watch, "Stop thief," was on the point of bursting from her lips, when the avenue which had been opened by the hand, immediately became occupied by a countenance which she recogn. ed to be that of Jarvis Block.

The alarm she was experiencing was most probably depicted on her features, for he ex-

claimed, "Lord bless you, my Lady, don't be frightened; 'tis only me; but I would get hold of your hand, because I had a mind you should give me a shake of mine, and wish me joy."

"Joy! Mr. Block, of what?" returned her Ladyship.

"Of being married!" replied Block, in a voice of exultation; "Don't you remember the last time we chanced to meet here at the play, I wished you joy of your lucky wedding; and now, ain't it very odd, the first time we happen to see one another after mine, should be in the same place;—very comical, ain't it?—had you heard I was married?"

"Oh no, I had heard nothing about you," said her ladyship.

"Well, I wonder you did not see it in the news," returned he; "but you wish me joy I am sure, don't you?—now I tell you how it is with me."

"Oh yes, I wish you well," replied her Ladyship, "and I hope you have taken care to make such a choice, that my wishes may not be thrown away upon you."

"Oh dear heart, bless you, that I have," answered Block, "she is a very nice woman indeed; quite a fine woman I assure you; one of your people of fashion, and I do think as beautiful a face as ever I saw in my life; I first got acquainted with her at my Lady Delaval's masquerade."

"Did you indeed?" cried Lady Buckhurst, in a tone of voice that implied, "I should think she must be somebody of consequence by that."

"Here she is standing next to me," said Block; "we are waiting till we can get a coach, and I suppose you are doing the same;—And so, as here is a minute's opportunity, give me leave to introduce her to you."

Lady Buckhurst could have no reason for dissenting from this proposition, and Jarvis Block drew forward a female, in whom her Ladyship, to her uncontroulable astonishment, beheld the ci-devant Mrs. Flap.

The features of the two females thus opposed flashed with expressions which although they were unintelligible to poor Jarvis, still forcibly conveyed to him that there were

feelings of no very pleasant nature passing in the heart of each; and before he had time to ask an explanation, the sound of "Lady Buckhurst's carriage," echoing through the place, she precipitately retreated, leaving him and his rib to their reflections.

Jarvis Block was unknown to Lady Buckhurst's visitors, and of course she spoke but little of him that night; but in the morning when her guests were departed, and she was left alone with Amica, she related to her her adventure, with innumerable comments upon those who had been concerned in it; and Amica could not forbear expressing her regret, at so good tempered a character as Jarvis Block appeared to her to be, having been made the dupe, as she could not doubt he had, of the unjustifiable measures of an artful, and designing woman.

A few days after this, Amica, one morning entering the drawing-room where her mother was sitting, closed the door hastily after her, and remained standing by it after it was shut, as if she were in the act of listening for the steps of some one, whom she imagined to be following her.

"What are you doing?—What is the matter?" said Lady Buckhurst, "is there any body on the outside of the door?"

"I thought," answered Amica, "but I suppose I was mistaken; I thought as I passed the gallery, I caught a glimpse of Mr. Block coming up the stairs."

"Mistaken indeed!" exclaimed her Ladyship," He could never have the assurance to come here after being married to that good for nothing woman; a mere hussey!"

"But it was not evident, Madam," replied Amica "from his introducing her to you last night, and the words with which he prefaced the introduction, that he does not know her real character?"

"Why that's true, as you say," returned Lady Buckhurst, "and for fear he should have the impudence, or ignorance to bring her here, I shall send down orders to the porter directly, not to admit him, or any body belonging to him into this house, on any account whatever."

Her Ladyship immediately rang the bell, and John appearing, she issued her commands to this effect.

"Mr. Block is now in the house, my Lady," said John.

"In the house!" echoed her Ladyship, "where?"

"In the Colonel's bed-room," John returned.

"It is very extraordinary," said Lady Buckhurst, "that the Colonel should receive a visit from that man, when he is so ill, that I myself have only seen him once since he received his wound, and Miss Dimick not at all; and yesterday he refused to see Mr. Valmont, and I don't know who all;—very extraordinary indeed!"

Lady Buckhurst always directed the comments she made, in the hearing of her servants, so decidedly to their consideration with her eyes, that John gaining encouragement, from her manner, to reply, said, "I fancy, Madam, it is something particular that Mr. Block is gone up about, for when he first sent up his name, the Colonel refused to see him; and then he asked for pen and ink, and wrote a note."—

"Wrote a note! did he?" cried Lady Buckhurst, whose naturally impatient tem-

per, would never suffer her to hear a tale to its conclusion without interpolating her own remarks, "well, and what then?

"Why, Madam, the note was carried to the Colonel," answered John, "and a few minutes after he had received it, he sent down again, and desired Mr. Block would come up."

"Well do you keep in the way," resumed her Ladyship, "and if Mr. Block asks for either me or my daughter, say we are not at home; be sure you do not let him in here."

John bowed and retired.

"Sure enough it was Jarvis Block then you saw on the stairs," said her Ladyship; "what can be the meaning of he and the Colonel being so great together?—Don't you remember, child, on the day of my Lady Dellaval's masquerade, how the dinner was almost spoiled, by waiting for him and the Colonel? he was shut up with him then ever so long in Sir Benjamin's study; you know at the time I remarked how odd it was, and so I think it now, and ten times odder his having him to see him in his chamber, when

he don't receive nobody else there ;—some people have such strange ways."

So Amica thought, but reluctant as she had ever been to speak her sentiments of Colonel Buckhurst's actions, that reluctance was now increased ten fold, since the proposition of marriage which he had made to her, and she guarded against even a turn of feature which might be construed by her mother into the indication of any opinion concerning him which was passing in her heart.

Dropping for a while this subject, her Ladyship introduced in its stead Sir Jasper Wormeaten, and in the most forcible manner described to Amica the melancholy cloud which had pervaded his features when he had looked around the house for her in vain on the preceding evening.

Amica still continued silent.

"Ah !" cried Lady Buckhurst, "I've a notion you are higgle haggling in your own mind about him, and will have him after all ;—And my fear is that you should come to the resolution when it is too late ; and upon my word, I do assure you, that I think it not at all unlikely that if you ain't quick about

it, he may be snapped up out of your reach; for the night I was at the play, there were Major Brevet's five daughters, all setting their caps at him from one box; and the Miss Baits bowing and nodding to him from another; and there was the widow Wagtail making room for him between her and her daughter, as much as to tell him they were either of them at his service; and many more bsides t hem, all upon the look out after him; —and now only think, child, how provoked and jealous they would all be, were you to take the Baronet at his word! why half of them would burst with envy to see you his wife; and I should admire to behold it.

Amica's mind was not one of those which place their own happiness on the mean foundation of another's envy; but convinced that argument in cases of this nature was entirely lost upon her mother, she endeavoured rather to give a turn to the conversation, than try to weaken Lady Buckhurst's forces in the debate; and after a time she retired to the consolation of that friend, which soothes the harrass-

ed mind of the persecuted, unruffles the brow of the care worn, and pours a lenient balm upon the mind of affliction.—She retired to her chamber to taste the temporary enjoyment of solitude.

CHAPTER XXII.

A Debate upon Self-interest, better suited to the Feelings and Capacity of our Knight, than one upon the Public Weal.

AT the expiration of nearly two hours, Jarvis Block departed without asking to see either Lady Buckhurst or her daughter, or making any inquiries concerning them:—It had been remarked by Sir Benjamin's servants that Block had appeared agitated at the time of his going up to the Colonel's chamber, and that when he had descended from it, the irritation of his mind had been still more visible:—by the Colonel's attendants it had been observed that their master had appeared ill at ease since the departure of his visitor, and their suspicions were confirmed by his dispatching a note to his attorney, a Mr. Demur, who shortly after called upon him, and with whom he was shut up in pri-

vacy in his chamber for a period full as long as Jarvis Block had passed there with him.

The character of Mr. Demur was well known in the metropolis; he was a person to whom all young men of fashion made application in their difficulties; he had the reputation of dabbling in money lending, as well as law writing; and he was a man, who if a cause could be gained by subtilty, was certain to make his client victorious; a man well acquainted how far it is possible to make law triumph over equity; and by no means backward in the charges which he made for the use of his keenness of talent.

After his departure, the Colonel seemed to be himself again; Mr. Demur and he had been heard to laugh heartily together before the latter departed; and it is very seldom that those laugh who believe themselves to have the worst side of a cause.

Eager as Sir Benjamin Buckhurst was to impart Sir Jasper's proposition to his son, still no consideration could ever induce him to lose sight of the main chance, which was with him concentered in the interest of his commercial house; and having early on the day following to that on which it was made

to him, been unexpectedly called to attend to a concern of importance to his pocket at Rochester, this communication had not yet taken place; a circumstance which he did not regret, as he hoped that the Colonel would gain health and strength during the few days of his necessary absence, and be the better able to discuss the matter with him at his return.

A few hours after the departure of Jarvis Block, Sir Benjamin returned home from his country expedition to a late dinner, and her Ladyship immediately informed him of what had that morning occurred concerning Jarvis Block, to which she subjoined, the inquiry of "Don't you think it very strange?"

"Not at all," answered the Knight, "I see nothing very strange in my son's receiving a visitor in his bed-chamber if he chooses it."

Sir Benjamin had certain tones which always silenced his wife, except she was contending for her own rights; at such a juncture no key was efficacious in reducing hers to the *piano;* and the knight's last sentence being spoken in *forté,* the lady did not venture a rejoinder.

Had not Sir Benjamin's mind been occupied by other matters of greater importance to himself, he would, perhaps, have attended more to his wife's communications respecting Mr. Block, but he was employed in devising how to impart to his son the proposal which Sir Jasper had submitted to his consideration; and for which purpose he went to pay the Colonel a visit immediately after dinner.

It requires no great skill to repeat any circumstance which has been detailed to us; the difficulty is frequently, how to word the narration in such a manner that it shall convey an impression favourable to our wishes; and such was just now the case with Sir Benjamin, who most earnestly desired to prevail by his rhetoric upon his son, to yield up Amica in favour of his restoration to parliamentary honours, free of additional expence.

The conversation which took place between Sir Benjamin and his son was carried on with great vehemence on both sides; and as a warm debate is more apt to excel in words chosen for effect, than elegance; instead of presenting our readers with a minute detail of the dialogue, we shall only give them

the heads of the controversy, and inform them what was the result.

Sir Benjamin opened the business by communicating the Baronet's liberal offer respecting the seat in parliament, and the reward by which he expected the obligation to be cancelled:—the Colonel did not wait to hear any more before he vehemently inquired, "Whether his father intended to accept a gratification of his own wishes, at the expence of his happiness?—If it is your wish," he cried, "to see me live, give me Amica!"

"But suppose," returned the knight, "I should promise to give you something better worth your having?"

The Colonel inquired, "What there could possibly be in life of which the possession was more desireable?"

"Are not rank and consequence more desireable," replied Sir Benjamin, "than any other consideration? You have always been of that opinion yourself till now."

"What can you say to bring me back to that opinion?" inquired the Colonel.

Sir Benjamin smiled with inward exultation at the apparent avowal which had been

contained in the last question advanced by his son, that there still might exist a possibility of exaltation of rank, outweighing the power of love in his heart; indeed it was an event which he did not doubt would take place, as soon as he could gain the Colonel's hearing to the proposal which he meant to offer to his consideration; for he had ever perceived, that authority in life, was the passion which amidst the numerous ones that swayed his heart, ranked as the superior in power.

"Why," replied Sir Benjamin, "the plan which I have devised for the advancement of myself and my family; and in projecting which I can assure you I have been principally actuated, by my desire of seeing you, my only son, not only a happy man, but a great one, is this—to accept Sir Jasper's offer of the seat in parliament, and to expend the money which an election would have cost me, in another way."

"How so, Sir?" asked the Colonel.

"Why thus," returned his father, "I have had pretty broad hints, that although one cannot go with a purse of gold in one's hand

to buy such a thing as one may say, still by means of money and friends, I might very soon get myself made a baronet—what do you think of that, eh Charles?—a baronet! —well then, I would make a condition now with Sir Jasper, that in case of such an honour happening to me, he should transfer the borough to you—what do you say to that?—you yourself a parliament-man;—I, a baronet—and you, and your sons, and your son's son's sons for ever and aye, heirs to the title:—in which case you must perceive, that instead of marrying Amica for love, it will immediately become your business to form a connexion with some family of distinction which may, by its rank and power, add to the consequence and interest of your own:—what think you of my plan? —Is it not an admirable one?"

Our readers have already had our reasons for not detaining them upon the dialogue which preceded Sir Benjamin's explanation, and we think that those readers whom we most wish to please, will be equally satisfied with a summary account of the re-union of sentiment between a father and a son whose

minds are unacquainted with the value of such gratifications as are a credit to the feelings of those who possess them; but who in their passage through life pass heedlessly by its golden honours in the pursuit of those tinsel illusions which dazzle the senses, but cannot reflect honour on the heart;—suffice it, therefore, to say, that as the father had predicted, the idea of precipitately becoming the heir of a baronet and a member of parliament himself, gave an entire turn to the feelings of the son, which immediately banished all recollection of his love for Amica from his heart.—He was so well acquainted with his father's concerns as to know that he could not afford both the expences of a contested election, and the purse of gold which was adroitly to be expended upon another venture, and accordingly in order to secure to himself and his family these two good things, he without one pang of regret freed his heart from the trammels of love, to surrender it at the shrine of ambition.

Sir Benjamin having made a convert of his son to his inclinations, proceeded in the fulness of his joy to a closet scene with his

wife; at which having imparted to her a history of such events as she had before been unacquainted with, he squeezed her hand, leaving in it a hundred pound note, which he told her he wished her to expend in the purchase of a lace veil, an article of dress which he considered would be very becoming to her small features; and begging her as a return for his kindness to exert all her authority with Amica, to induce her to accept the hand of Sir Jasper; he chucked her under the chin; gave her two or three hearty kisses; and left her.

The liberality of Sir Benjamin's present; the civility of the compliment he had paid her in his augurations of a veil being becoming to her features; and above all the kisses, disposed her Ladyship most seriously to second the wishes of her husband; and being already in her heart a friend to the alliance of Sir Jasper with her daughter, she experienced no constraint in ranking on the side of her husband's inclinations.

Accordingly having locked up her bank note in a small cabinet of her own, which stood by the side of her bed, and which had

never contained such a sum since its mistress had been metamorphosed into a knight's wife, she sent a message to Amica, requesting to see her in her dressing-room.

As we are acquainted what were her sentiments with regard to her daughter's union with the Baronet, and also know what were Amica's on that point, it is unnecessary to give a detail of her Ladyship's opening to the conversation, or of the reluctance with which Amica listened, and replied to her arguments in its favour.

"What is there," cried her Ladyship, after the subject had been some time discussed between them, "that you can object to in Sir Jasper, more than his being old; and suppose he is a little in years, what of that, is not age honourable?"

"It is always in the power of age to render itself so," replied Amica, "and great is then the respect which it deserves;—but when it makes itself contemptible by such follies, not to give them a harsher name, as are the daily practice of Sir Jasper, it casts even a reflection upon those who espouse its cause."

"Thank you for the compliment," replied her Ladyship, "for I suppose that was meant at me, Miss—but, however," she added, her tone softening from the high pitch in which she had expressed the former sentence, "I do allow he has many comical ways with him; but never mind that; if you can but make up your mind to endure with him for a little while, you may rely on soon becoming a widow, for it is impossible that any body can live long, that eats meat in the night; and such loads of Cayenne pepper; and is always taking one quack medicine or another."

"My dear Madam," returned Amica, "can you conceive me so debased in feeling, that I could marry a man, of whose death I should feel desirous, even before I suffered him to lead me to the altar?"

"Fiddle faddle!" cried Lady Buckhurst, "if an old gentleman chooses to marry a young Miss, he cannot expect her to love him as well as if he were a man of her own age;—that's his look out."

"But does it not," returned Amica, "become a young woman herself rather to

marry a man of her own age, for whom she can entertain the affection due to a husband?"

"You mean that fellow Stanton," cried her Ladyship, "but it is of no manner of use whatever your bringing up him to me, for once again, and for the last time I tell you, you never shall have my consent to marry him, and that's enough: it would not hurt me more to see you begging your bread, than married to such a nobody; I desire I may never hear his name again; you'll disoblige me excessively if I do."

"I obey you, Madam," returned Amica; "may I in return request a reciprocal indulgence of you, not to mention Sir Jasper Wormeaton to me?"

"Upon my word," cried her Ladyship, "a pretty pass the times are come to, when children want to enter into agreements with their parents! fine audacious doings truly! but I shall enter into no such a covenant I promise you! You talk of the fineness of your feelings; don't let the fifth commandment slip your memory; and I tell you, you will both disoblige, and dishonour me, most

exceedingly, if you have not the wisdom shortly, and very shortly too, to admit the visits of Sir Jasper as your intended husband: you are mine, and, therefore, you are bound to be guided in all things by me; I am Sir Benjamin's, and it exactly becomes me to be ruled in like manner by him; he says, it will be for the honour and glory of us all, that you should marry Sir Jasper; and, therefore, I say with him, that marry him you shall!"

Fortunately for Amica, the entrance of Sir Benjamin with a couple of gentlemen who were come to sup with him, put a period to the conversation, and freed her from some portion of those disagreeable feelings which she would at the present juncture have experienced, had she been constrained to have supped with her mother and Sir Benjamin, without the relief of any fourth person: at as early an hour as propriety would permit her to retire, she went to her chamber, where her mind derived infinite consolation from reflecting on what had passed between herself and Lady Dellaval, a few evenings before;—" When she and Mr. Leu-

witzer return," thought Amica, "all my cares will be at an end!"—How short-sighted are mortals! how far was she from suspecting what the morrow was fated to bring forth!

CHAPTER XXIII.

Chaos comes again.

THE morning opened with the arrival of Mr. Wilfort the jeweller, from Oxford-street, who came to announce to Sir Benjamin, that he had found a jeweller in the city, of whom the diamond sprig had been purchased, for the unlawful possession of which the two offenders were now held in custody to take their trial at the ensuing sessions. "The city jeweller," he added, "had recognised the diamond ornament the moment it had been shewn to him, and voluntarily offered to swear that it had been manufactured for him by his own workmen, within the space of the last three months."

The family had not been long seated at the breakfast-table, where Sir Benjamin was recounting to them the report of the jeweller, when a note accompanied by a small box,

were brought to Amica, who perceiving that her name was wrongly spelt in the direction, inquired of John, "If he knew whence they came?"

He replied, "That the girl who had brought them was waiting in the hall for an answer, and that he believed her to be the same who had let Amica into such a house in such a street in the vicinity of Leicester-square, on the day he had attended her in her walk."

Not doubting from John's account, that they came from Madame Le Blanc, and dreading lest her mother should know that they did so, in her confusion she forbore either to open the note, or to make any comments upon its receipt.

"Whose house could you have any business to go to in such a street?" exclaimed Lady Buckhurst. You may have more *clandestical* affairs on your hands, besides the one I already know of; and I insist on seeing that note."

To have refused compliance would have been to own herself guilty, she accordingly said, "I have committed no crime, and there-

fore I cannot fear the exposure of my actions," and with these words, she broke the seal, and with a trembling hand put the paper into that of her mother. Its contents were these:

"MADAM!

"I HAVE been so fortunate as to learn your "name and place of abode from the woman "of the house where I lodge, who saw you "leave my apartment; the means I have of "shewing my gratitude to you for your "kindness and liberality are very slender, but "I hope you will not deem impertinent the "liberty I take of begging your acceptance "of the artificial *bouquet* which accompanies "this.

"Your very humble servant,

"ANTOINETTE LE BLANC."

"What!" cried Lady Buckhurst, "Le *Blank* and artificial flowers! Yes, yes, this must be the wife of that audacious French fellow that wounded the Colonel. And can it be possible that you have been such a simpleton—such an ungrateful simpleton as to

go near her house, or to do any thing for her, after what had passed between Sir Benjamin's son and her husband?"

"An action like the one I have performed, Madam, requires no disguise," replied Amica. "I called upon Madame Le Blanc, at the request of Mr. Leuwitzer, with a small present which he sent to her by me."

"And so Mr. Leuwitzer sets himself up to reward those that insult the Buckhursts, does he?" exclaimed Sir Benjamin. "I could not have thought it of him I'm sure; but I'm glad I know it, I shall be prepared how to deal with him when he comes back to England: I'll tell him of it I promise you."

"If you don't I will," cried her Ladyship: then turning to the servant, she added, "Did you not say there was a girl waiting, John?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"Take down her box to her again, and tell her to go about her business directly."

"May not I, Madam, be allowed to send some message back with the box," said Amica: "only a message, if you do not choose I should accept the flowers?"

John waited for his lady's reply to this request, which she conveyed to him in these

words, "Go down this instant with the box, will you? and obey me when I speak to you."

"If you really love me, Madam, as you profess to do," said Amica, "you must love me the more for performing the will of him through whom I am restored to you."

Sir Benjamin, with the readiness of authoritative vulgarity, vented many invectives against the benevolent German for interfering, as he considered his charity to the Le Blancs to be, in the affairs of his family; and her Ladyship, taking her ideas from her husband's, poured out upon Amica vollies of rebuke for her undutifulness.

This controversy was by no means concluded, though the gentle Amica sat weathering the storm like a shorn lamb; when fuel was added to the flame of ire already kindled against her in the breasts of her mother and Sir Benjamin.

Whilst it had been the intention of the Colonel to persevere in his suit to Amica, Sir Benjamin had, in compliance with his request, given orders for no letters being carried out of his house to the post without being first brought to him for inspection. This

order he had forgotten to repeal since the change of politics in his family had taken place; and accordingly a couple of letters which Amica had sent into the kitchen by her maid, for the purpose of being from thence conveyed to the post, were now brought to him by the butler; who, as he laid them down before his master, informed him why he had done so.

"Aye, it don't signify: it is of no consequence," cried Sir Benjamin. "Take them away."

"Stop!" cried her Ladyship, "I say, give them to me!" for in the direction of one of these letters, she had unfortunately seen the name of Maurice Stanton.

The butler obeyed, and left the room.

"So you have been writing to him, Miss," said her Ladyship, "notwithstanding the discourse we had about him together last night! and also to Mr. Leuwitzer?—Hum! very well, these letters shall go when you are Sir Jasper's wife."

Her Ladyship had placed the letters before her upon the table: Amica snatched them both up, and threw them into the middle of the fire. She then said, "About these letters,

Madam, I must submit to your will; but the wife of Sir Jasper I never will be;" and unable to suppress her tears, she hurried out of the room, and went to her own chamber.

"There's obstinacy for you!" cried Sir Benjamin.

"I can't think what I am to do to persuade her to it," replied her Ladyship. "I shall soon lose all power over her, if she chooses to act undutifully and oppose me; for next month you know, next month she is of age, and then she will be her own mistress."

"If she does not marry him, I shall wish I had never seen her—or you either!" exclaimed Sir Benjamin: "and you may live to know as much perhaps:" and with this affectionate declaration he left her.

Her Ladyship continued sitting by the breakfast-table in no very enviable situation of mind; fits of anger, sorrow, and vexation, by turns filling her heart: and how long she would have remained indulging her reflections is uncertain, as they were broken in upon by John, who entered the apartment to announce a most unexpected visitor.——"There is a person below who wishes to speak to you, Madam; and who desires me to in-

form you that her name is O'Rouke," said John.

"I never heard such a name in my life," replied her Ladyship. "Who is she?—What is she?—What does she want?"

"You have seen her, Madam," returned John: "she is the Irish mother of Mrs. Flap, the milliner in Old Bond-street."

"I shan't admit the woman," cried her Ladyship. "Tell her I ain't at home."

John returned in a few minutes with information that Mrs. O'Rouke declared, "If her Ladyship was not at home, she would wait till she did come home, for she had something of the utmost consequence to impart to her."

"Well then, I suppose I must see her," returned her Ladyship; "so tell her to come up."

In a couple of minutes Mrs. O'Rouke obeyed the summons, by appearing in the drawing-room. She was a woman in whose person there was not one feminine grace: her stature was above the common height of females; her bones were extremely large and prominent; her skin almost of an olive colour; her eyes full of penetration and inso-

lence; and her cheeks daubed with rouge; on her head she wore a round hat in every respect resembling a man's; and the rest of her person was enveloped in a brown cloth pelisse, trimmed with bear's skin.

Lady Buckhurst rose to receive her, that she might not be under the necessity of asking her to sit. As her Ladyship had no debts at the shop, of which she could suppose this woman to be come to demand the payment, she could only judge that her visit bore some reference to Jarvis Block's marriage with her daughter.

"Your Ladyship's *sarvant*," said Mrs. O'Rouke; which words, spoken in a tone uniting vulgarity and a strong smack of the Irish brogue, she accompanied with a reverence which was neither bow nor courtesy, but partook of the nature of both.

Lady Buckhurst acknowledged that she perceived her entrance, by a slight inclination of her head, whilst on her countenance was eloquently written the inquiry of, "What do you want with me?"

"You are no doubt surprised to see me," returned Mrs. O'Rouke; and you'll be more surprised when I'll be after telling you the

rason that brings me here: I am come to occasion you much disturbance and confusion in your family I can promise you; but I *consaive* it my duty, and therefore I think nothing of the matter. You'd better be seated, for we'll be a pretty while bringing the matter to an explanation." And with these words she placed herself upon a chair and motioning to her Ladyship to take one by her side, with which signal however she did not immediately comply, Mrs. O' Rouke continued, "If your affections are placed on the bit of a young woman that lives with you here in this house, and passes for your daughter, I'll be very sorry for you upon my soul, and also, my dear, for the young *crater* herself; for certainly it is a hard case for people's affections to be torn asunder, when they are *irremoveably* placed upon one another."

"God bless me!" cried Lady Buckhurst, sinking into a chair as she spoke, "What is it you mean? do you want to insinuate that my daughter has been guilty of any action that renders her unworthy of my regard?"

"Oh *Jasus*, no!" replied Mrs. O' Rouke, "all the saints in father O' Mullinhack's calendar forbid it!—Your own natural begot daughter stands alone in the world for her good qualifications; I'll be bold to say that there is not one like her amongst all those that resemble her."

"No indeed," said Lady Buckhurst," I think there are very few resemble my Amica."

"Oh botheration!" cried Mrs. O' Rouke, "but that is the blunder of the business, that I am using all this *resarve* and delicacy to bring you acquainted with; the young female *crater* you are speaking of, is no more a daughter of your own, than I am twin-brother to our royal Queen's gracious majesty."

"What!" exclaimed Lady Buckhurst, "what's that you say, Amica not my daughter?—Why who can she be, if she is not my Amy?"

"That's a question," returned Mrs O' Rouke, "myself is not able to answer you; nor is it *matarial* to the business we are upon;—I am come to you *consarning* her who *is* your daughter, and not *consarning*

the person who is *not* she:—Oh it is a strange story to be sure, but I'll be after making all the obscurity of the case as *clare* as day-light to you, in a very short preamble of my own."

"Good Heavens!" cried Lady Buckhurst, scarcely able to articulate through surprise, and still so anxious that her inquiries forced themselves from her lips, "why who then do you mean to tell me, is my daughter?"

"I *mane* to tell you nothing but the truth," replied Mrs. O' Rouke, "I'll be after saying no more than I can prove; and you are an unnatural mother if you don't bless me for setting the affairs of your family in an upright posture," and this declaration she followed, by asserting that the real and true daughter of Lady Buckhurst, was she who has hitherto been known to our readers by the name of—— Mrs. Flap!

If vulgar pride ever suffered a complete mortification and downfall of its extravagant hopes and ideas, such it will doubtless be allowed must have been the miserable sensation at this moment experienced by

Lady Buckhurst;—what event could imagination furnish more poignant to the feelings of a woman whose sole happiness in life consisted in worldly consequence, than to be told, that instead of being the mother of an all accomplished and fascinating girl like Amica, her real offspring was a being of the low avocation and manners of Mrs. Flap?—one whom she had herself seen at the public theatre engaged in a loose kind of intercourse with the loungers of the lobby;—the nature of whose pretended shop, and whose personal character were so well known, that her friend Lady Cackle had informed her, without reserve, that she was one of those whom she termed *abominables*;"——One, to whom she had learnt from Amica, that Colonel Buckhurst had been in the habit of paying visits in the freeest style;—One, of whom her maid Lenox had informed her, that even her own dear Sir Benjamin, was reported to have purchased his gloves; and one, who had ultimately patched up her fragile reputation by becoming the wife of Jarvis Block, the traveller:—This woman she was now called upon to

acknowledge as her daughter! Heavens and earth! Mrs. Flap her daughter! Jarvis Block, her son-in-law!!!—the thought was distraction!—the torture of her mind burst from her lips in a lengthened groan; in uttering which she sunk to the ground in a state of insensibility, which afforded her a short relief from her dreadful reflections.

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